AN OUTLINE
of St. Paul's
EPISTLE
TO THE
ROMANS

By
C. E. STUART

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By

C. E. STUART

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PREFATORY NOTE

IN the following pages it has been attempted to furnish the English Bible student with an outline of the Epistle to the Romans, with a view to help and to stimulate the reader to a careful study of this important portion of the Divine Word. In pursuance of this purpose the author has desired to introduce only that which an *English* reader could understand, the design being to help such—now, he would fain hope, thanks to the free preaching of the Gospel, a large and an increasing class. He has therefore written it in the form of papers, the better to point out to the reader the different important heads of the argument in which the ordinary division into chapters often fails to help. And the reader's attention will also be found directed to the Scriptural use and meaning of certain words and phrases met with in the Epistle, which might almost be characterised as technical terms, in connection with the Gospel, *e.g.*, "the righteousness of God," "condemnation," the "old man," "the flesh," "in the flesh," "in the Spirit," etc. The Authorised Version has been used throughout, the better attested readings and amended translations, chiefly from the Revised Version, being noted where called for; and the labours of others, honoured names on the roll of Christian saints, have been utilized, the words of some, too, being occasionally recorded. That the blessing of Him, whose word the Epistle is, may rest on the effort made to open it up, is the prayer of the writer of the following pages.

AN OUTLINE

OF

ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

I.

Introduction.

TO the Apostle Paul was entrusted a stewardship (1 Cor. ix. 17), having been made, as he tells us, a minister of the Gospel, and also a minister to fulfil (or complete) the word of God (Coloss. i. 23, 25). Great was the favour thus bestowed on him. He felt it (1 Tim. i. 12), and sought to respond to it, by learning, as God was willing to teach him (Gal. i. 16), and by working in the ministry, as God enabled him (2 Cor. x. 14-16; Rom. xv. 18-20). Entrusted with this double ministry, we read in the Acts of labours and hardships encountered in the discharge of it; and we gather from different epistles special features of his teaching concerning the Gospel, and concerning the Church. With the former are we now concerned.

Different Gospels.—A message of glad tidings was nothing new to God's earthly people. Of old their forefathers had been evangelized in the wilderness (Heb iv. 2). To the dead, writes Peter, the Gospel had been preached (1 Peter iv. 6). By the Lord Jesus Christ, when on earth, the glad tidings of the kingdom of God were carried to every city and village which He reached, as He journeyed from place to place accompanied by the twelve (Luke viii. 1). But the Gospel, or glad tidings of the *grace* of God (Acts xx. 24) was a testimony never proclaimed till the Lord Jesus had died, had risen, had ascended, and had sent the Holy Ghost. It is this which

is called at one time the Gospel of God (Rom. i. 1), because it comes from Him; at another, the Gospel of the grace of God (Acts xx. 24), because it tells of His grace; at another the Gospel of His Son (Rom. i. 9), of Christ (Rom. xv. 19), of our Lord Jesus (2 Thess. i. 8), because it speaks of that which He has suffered and done for us. It is also called the Gospel of our salvation (Ephes. i. 13), for by it we are saved (1 Cor. xv. 2). To this Gospel was Paul separated. These glad tidings in his day were new; but, when received, were found to meet the deep need of a ruined, guilty creature.

Man's Natural State.—For there are two conditions in which every responsible unconverted person is found. He is guilty, and he is dead. As guilty he needs forgiveness and justification, for he has sinned. As dead he needs life. How all this is provided we learn from the Gospel. And now, with the clearer light shed on it by Christian teaching, we can better understand the Lord's mind in giving the three parables of the fifteenth chapter of Luke, indicating by the two first that men were guilty and dead, and illustrating by the last God's reception of one of whom both these conditions had been true—"was dead and is alive, was lost and is found." Further we get to see what a full subject the Gospel really is, how fruitful in instruction for the saint, needful too to be kept in his remembrance to the last day of his life, as well as of vital importance for the guiltiest of the race of man. For though the elements of the Gospel of God essential to salvation can be expressed in the simplest language, and have been embodied in a few sentences (1 Cor. xv. 2-4); yet to graduate, as it were, in this divine and evangelical school of learning, the student must study both the Epistle to the Romans and that to the Ephesians; since the former treats of the Gospel as meeting the guilty, and the latter sets it forth in relation to those spiritually dead. With the Epistle to the Romans is our present concern.

Origin of the Assembly in Rome.—Written by Paul from Corinth during his third great missionary tour, and when he was on his way to Jerusalem, accompanied by the alms-bearers from the Churches of Galatia, Macedonia, and Achaia (Rom. xv. 25, 26; 1 Cor. xvi. 1), it

was the latest in date of those six apostolic letters that we possess written before his first imprisonment, which commenced at Jerusalem and ended at Rome. The Church of the Thessalonians, as well as that at Corinth and those in Galatia, had all been founded by the personal labours of the Apostle Paul. With that at Rome, however, which in this resembled the Church at Colosse, it was different. God had begun the work in those cities without the direct intervention of any of the apostles, and to the assemblies in each of these cities Paul, when he wrote, was personally a stranger. The assembly, or Church, in Rome owed its origin to the labour of one or more saints of God, whose names and works recorded and remembered on high, have not found a place in history upon earth. The Apostles Paul and Peter are said to have died there, martyred about the same time by the Emperor Nero; but neither Peter nor Paul founded the Church in that city, though Rome was comprised in the especial province of labour committed to the latter (Rom. i. 13; xv. 15-22). Many years indeed before our epistle was written, there had been Christians in Rome (xv. 23). And remembering its position as the capital of the empire, which in boastful language was called in Greek *oikoumene*, *ie.*, the inhabited earth (Luke ii. 1), it is not difficult to suppose that, with a constant flow of people from various parts of the empire up to the capital, some Christians may have reached it in very early days, and have formed the nucleus of that company in Rome, designated by the apostle as "beloved of God."

Paul, as we know, was the apostle of the Gentiles (Gal. ii. 8), and a vessel most fitted to set forth the Gospel of God. No one in the whole apostolic college was so suited. For in him, as he has told us, Christ Jesus had shown all longsuffering, having taken him up, who was before a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious (1 Tim. i. 13); terms characteristic, the last, of the heathen world (Rom. i. 30), the second of the Jews in the apostle's time (1 Thess. ii. 15), and the first of the last days of this dispensation (2 Tim. iii. 2). In accordance with this, it is to his letters that we are turned for a full exposition of the Gospel of the grace of God. And as Phœbe, a deaconess of the assembly at Cenchrea, the

port of Corinth, was about to undertake a journey to Rome, the apostle, availing himself of the opportunity, indited this epistle, which served as a letter of commendation on her behalf to the saints in Rome, and gave an opening to the apostle to set forth in an orderly and comprehensive manner that Gospel, in which we learn how God has commended His love toward us (Rom. v. 8).

Divisions of the Epistle.—Perusing this letter, we see that it naturally breaks up into its component parts. Beginning with a description of Gentiles and Jews, the former ungodly, the latter chargeable with holding the truth in unrighteousness (i.-iii. 20), we learn first of God's provision in the Gospel by virtue of the *blood* of Christ to justify the ungodly, setting believers before Him in perfect peace, and with a bright hope of the future, etc. (iii. 21-v. 11). Next we are made acquainted with the provision by the *death* of Christ for those justified by faith, and who are also in Christ, to walk here as freed from the power of sin, etc. (v. 12-viii. 11). And then we read how such will be freed from the presence of sin by the exercise of divine *power* in a coming day; and further that creation, too, made subject to vanity by reason of man's fall, will be emancipated from the bondage of corruption, and brought to share in the liberty of the glory of the children of God (viii. 11-39).

Such is a very brief outline of the Gospel as set forth in this epistle, which for the better retention of it in the memory may be summarised as follows: freedom from the *guilt* of sin, freedom from the *power* of sin, to be followed in the future by freedom from the *presence* of sin.

But a difficulty might present itself to some minds. If Jews and Gentiles are all guilty before God, and are privileged on believing to share equally in the same blessings, does not such a Gospel clash with God's promises to Israel? This difficulty is noticed and settled in chapters ix-xi. After that practical exhortations for God's saints are set forth (xii.-xiii.); and mutual forbearance in non-essentials enjoined on believers from amongst Jews and from amongst Gentiles (xiv.-xv. 13). With a few more remarks interesting to the saints in Rome, followed by numerous salutations to Christians in the capital with whom the apostle was already ac-

quainted, this long letter, written by an amanuensis named Tertius, is brought to a fitting close by a doxology to the only wise God, on whose Gospel the apostle had dilated at such length. We must now look at the epistle more in detail.

II.

The Subject Opened. Chapter I. 1-18.

THIS may be divided into two parts. In the first (vv. 1-7) Paul presents his credentials, and gives his apostolic salutation to the saints in Rome. In the second (8-18), after expressing his longing desire to see them, and the effect he expected from such a visit, he introduces the great subject of his letter.

His Credentials.—"Paul, a servant (*lit.*, bond-servant) of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God." Such are his credentials. In common with others (Phil. i. 1) he calls himself a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, a designation which is true really of every Christian (1 Cor. vii. 22; Ephes. vi. 6), for each and all have been bought with a price: a designation which through grace he was determined should be manifestly true of him, who sought to maintain, and to teach that Gospel which he had received from God. "Do I," he asked (writing to the Galatians but a little while probably before he addressed himself to the saints in Rome) "now persuade men or God? or do I seek to please men? If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant (*lit.*, bond-servant) of Christ" (Gal. i. 10). Besides this designation he reminds them of his apostleship. He was an apostle, *i.e.*, one sent. Moreover, as he tells the Roman saints, he was a called apostle, *i.e.*, one by calling. Of that call he gave an account, when standing before Festus and all the Roman authorities at Cæsarea, making public mention, and, as far as we know, for the first time, of that which the Lord had said to him when he was upon the ground before Him in the neighbourhood of Damascus, "delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom* I send thee" (Acts xxvi. 17). Further, he was separated unto the Gospel of God. A bond-servant of Christ Jesus, a called apostle, separated

* "Now" is omitted by all Uncial MSS. Before Damascus he received his call. In the temple at Jerusalem he received the command to go then to the Gentiles (Acts xxvii. 21).

unto the Gospel, or glad tidings of God, this was the one who wrote to the Christians in Rome. His credentials were ample.

The Gospel of God.—God, then, has good news for His sinful creatures, good news first proclaimed after man's hatred to Him had been unmistakably declared by the crucifixion of His Son, and proclaimed by God through the instrumentality of His servants on earth. Is not God holy and righteous? Surely He is, and just because He is holy and righteous, and therefore must punish the impenitent in the future, He has raised up a ministry of reconciliation, and furnished its minister with the tidings which they are to declare (2 Cor. v. 18-21), to rescue, if possible, hell-deserving sinners from the otherwise inevitable doom which awaits them. Hence it is that the Gospel of the grace of God is preached. Hence too, it was that Paul was made a minister of the Gospel.

It was late, comparatively speaking, in the world's history before this good news was proclaimed. Yet it was not an after-thought in the mind of God. The glad tidings which Paul communicated, and now desired to preach in Rome, had been promised afore by God's prophets in the Holy Scriptures, or more literally (describing their character) "holy writings." Of this promise Peter in common with Paul bears witness (1 Pet. i. 10-12); and of it the prophetic writings of David, Isaiah, etc., afford proof after proof. But glad tidings of what? Not a man, for his history, age after age up to and even after the cross, only confirms God's judgment of him uttered just after the flood, *viz.*, that the imagination of his heart is evil from his youth (Gen. viii. 21). Glad tidings from God *about* such there could not be. Yet there could be, there are glad tidings from God *for* such, even good news concerning God's "Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of (not 'from') the dead" (i. 3, 4). We are turned then away from the race of Adam to the Virgin's Son, the inheritor of, and in whom will be fulfilled, the promises made to David His father, but who is also Son of God who walked on earth as a man, and now by

resurrection is declared to be Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness. His own resurrection who was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father (vi. 4), and the power of resurrection displayed by Him (John xi.), alike attest that He is Son of God (John v. 21-29). Through Him, the crucified, the rejected one by man, Paul had received (what grace on the Lord's part was thus displayed!) grace and apostleship, for the obedience to the (or of) faith among all the nations for His name's sake; "amongst whom," he adds, "are ye also the called of Jesus Christ; to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints; Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ" (5-7). God, and the Lord Jesus Christ were both working for the salvation of ungodly creatures.

We have learnt who Paul was. We learn here what Christians are. He was a bond-servant of Jesus Christ. He designates Christians as called ones, who belonged to Jesus Christ.* They were His—Paul was separated unto the Gospel of God—He tells them they were beloved of God. And if he was an apostle by calling, they were saints by calling, or literally, called saints. Now this marked them out as members of a special class. Saints, or holy ones, are not infrequently spoken of in the Divine Word. The elect angels are so described (Deut. xxxiii. 2; Job. xv. 15; Dan. viii. 13; Jude 14). The people of Israel are thus called (Deut. xxxiii. 3). But Israelites were such relatively by natural birth. Christians are saints by calling. To all such in Rome Paul wished grace and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace we need each day. Peace of heart too we require continually if we are not to be overwhelmed by the circumstances through which we pass. For peace of *heart* it is, not peace of *conscience*, of which the apostle here makes mention. What a favour to be a Christian! A slave in Rome, if a believer, had a portion from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, to which the Emperor with all his wealth and all his power was a

* Not that they were called by Him for it is God who calls (Rom. viii. 30; ix. 24; 1 Cor. i 9; Gal. i. 6, 15; 1 Thess. ii. 12; 1 Peter i. 15; 2 Peter i. 3; to which may be added, when rightly read, 1 Cor. vii. 17), but His called ones.

stranger.

Paul's Desires.—We pass on to a consideration of vv. 8-18. There were saints in Rome, and they were known to be such, for their faith was proclaimed throughout the whole world (8). In the capital of the Cæsars there were those whose duty it was to submit themselves to the powers that were, whilst owning, as the Jews and ignorant heathen would express it, "another King, one Jesus" (Acts xvii. 7). Converts from Judaism as well as from heathenism made up this company, the latter, it would seem, preponderating; for Paul reckoned, as we have already showed, the city and the saints in it as part of the sphere of labour especially entrusted to him, the apostle of the Gentiles (Rom. i. 13; Gal ii. 7-9). Through Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Achaia had he travelled, and from Jerusalem round about unto Illyricum he had fully preached the Gospel of Christ, yet not without frequent thoughts and desires of reaching the Italian peninsula, on the other side of the Adriatic, and in Rome itself to labour for his Lord. This hope, so long cherished, seemed now within measurable distance of its fulfilment (i. 10; xv. 23, 24). So he now unbosoms himself, and takes into his confidence all the saints of God in Rome. He longed to see them, that he might impart unto them some spiritual gift, to the end that they might be established, that is, as he expresses it, "that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me" (12). Their establishment in the faith and mutual encouragement, these were objects he had especially in view. He could impart to them; they might encourage him. He writes with the full consciousness of what he could do as an apostle, and yet was willing to take a place among them, recognizing each and all with himself as disciples of the same Master, and children of the same Father.

How far his expectations of mutual comfort were fulfilled we have no means of knowing. He reached the capital a prisoner, reserved for the hearing of the Emperor (Acts xxv. 21). And though encouraged by the sight of the Brethren, who went out to meet him as far as the Market of Appius, a distance of forty-three Roman miles from the capital, the Three Taverns being ten miles less

(Acts xxviii. 15); yet coldness, and even hostility on the part of some (Phil. i. 16), and neglect too as regards his personal wants, he evidently afterwards experienced. How he would establish believers in the faith is, however, no matter of doubt or conjecture. This letter affords us full indications, unfolding as it does the Gospel of God in a fulness, and in this branch of it a completeness, never before committed to writing. Some there were in Rome, such as Aquila and Priscilla (Rom. xvi. 3), who from previous intercourse with Paul had doubtless become familiar with the teaching he was about, through the instrumentality of Tertius, to commit to writing. But to many it probably came as what was quite new, an opening up of the Gospel in a manner unknown to them before, exhibiting a comprehensive grasp of a very large subject, which enabled the writer to expound it, as guided by the Holy Ghost, in an order, a simplicity, and a clearness which left nothing to be desired.

A Gospel for Saints.—Now this Gospel is a Gospel for saints of God. To such in Rome he desired to preach it (i. 15). How much had the preaching of it cost him already? What dangers and trials he had passed through in the prosecution of this service, 2 Cor. iv. 7-15 and xi. 23-33 can tell us. Had his ardour abated? Was his spirit cowed by all that he had suffered? Fearless, energetic, unwearied was this chosen vessel of the Lord Jesus Christ. He knew well to what dangers and harassing troubles the preaching of the Gospel had, and might still expose him. Yet, like one going forth in all the freshness and ardour of youth, though withal a veteran grown old in the service, he was ready, as far as in him lay, to preach the Gospel, as he writes, "to you that are at Rome also." "For," he adds, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel*; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from (or, on the principle of) faith to faith: as it is written, But† the just shall live by faith" (i. 16, 17). He knew well the temper of the weapon he wielded. He

* "Of Christ" is here omitted by the best Uncials and editors.

† The Authorised Version, in common with Tyndale, Cranmer, and the Genevan Versions, omitted the conjunction *but*.

knew well the effect it could produce, for he had proved it in his own case. It was the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. "Unto salvation." That was the end to be obtained. Yet not confined to the salvation of the soul, but taking in that of the person as well. The former is present blessing, as Peter reminds us; for the latter we wait, as he in common with Paul teaches (Rom. viii. 23; 1 Pet. i. 5-9). "To every one that believeth." Nationality, prejudices, training, let them be what they might, it mattered not, to both Jew and to Gentile the Gospel which Paul had received, and which he preached was God's power unto salvation. He had proved it to be so amongst ignorant heathen (Acts xiv.), as well as amongst the educated and highly civilised Athenians (Acts xvii.) and the licentious Corinthians (Acts xviii). He had proved it in the centre of idolatry, even in the city of the great temple of Diana (Acts xix). He counted on further proof of its divine power unto salvation within the walls of Rome. Nor, as we know, was he disappointed, for in the household of the Emperor the Gospel won its way (Phil. iv. 22).

The Secret of its Power.—What made those tidings so effective? Wherein lay the secret which wrought such a change in those who believed them? For we have the testimony of living and unbiassed witnesses to the effect on souls, in the charge formulated by Jews before the magistrates (*lit.* politarchs) of Thessalonica, "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also" (Acts xvii. 6) The secret of the success lay in this, that in the Gospel the righteousness of God on the principle of faith was revealed to faith. God could act righteously in grace to save, and to justify every one who believed.

Righteous by Faith.—Now the principle of this had been announced centuries before by the prophet Habakkuk (ii. 4). Commissioned to predict the near approach of the Chaldean invasion under Nebuchadnezzar, and the sorrows which would be inflicted on his countrymen by a nation no better than themselves, and acting in wanton cruelty, he turned to God about the matter, having a difficulty on his mind as to such dealings being allowed by the Most High. The answer he got, after standing on his watch and stationing himself on the tower. "Behold his soul,"

i.e., that of the oppressor, " is puffed up, it is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith." God did not approve of the oppressor's ways. The prophet was to trust Jehovah to work deliverance in His own way. Habakkuk bowed to that, and showed his faith in Jehovah to deliver those who trust in Him in the beautiful words which close his prayer, and which bring to a termination his written ministry which has reached us (iii. 17-19). Deliverance for those who nationally deserved chastisement, if they really trusted God, Habakkuk announced. God was righteous in justifying the ungodly who believed the Gospel, Paul set forth. The principle was the same, whether applied to the earthly people, or to us for eternity. The righteous shall live by faith. Israel deserved destruction, for they had sinned. But the righteous one should live by his faith. Men deserve everlasting perdition. But the just, or righteous one shall live by faith. It is interesting to see the Holy Spirit taking up His own word to the prophet, and expanding its meaning and the extent of its application through the agency of the apostle. To Habakkuk it unfolded hope for Israel. To Paul it spoke of the way of everlasting blessing for men, a divine principle, a sure resource for any ungodly or unrighteous one who would avail himself of it; and whether we read, as is more in consonance with the Hebrew, " The righteous shall live by his faith," or, as the order of the words in the New Testament might authorise, " The righteous by (or, on the principle of) faith shall live," the doctrine really taught is the same.

The Righteousness of God.—God's righteousness we read is revealed from faith to faith. It is important to be clear as to the meaning of this statement. God's righteousness means His consistency with that which He is, for He must always act in accordance with the characteristics of His nature. He is righteous, so He cannot think lightly of sin. He can make no compromise with iniquity. Punishment therefore must overtake those finally impenitent. Reason teaches this. Government and order, it is plain, would collapse if wickedness was never to be dealt with. Sacred history speaks on this matter in no uncertain strain. The fallen angels, as Peter reminds us, yet awaiting their doom, the flood, and the overthrow of

Sodom and Gomorrha, are all witnesses that God must and does deal with evil. And no one, surely, would arraign the Almighty for injustice in these cases. His righteousness has been, and will again be, manifested in punishing sinners. But the Gospel of God sets forth His righteousness in quite another way, *viz.*, in justifying ungodly people. And it furnishes an opportunity for the full unfolding of this important subject. For this, however, a revelation was requisite, and, blessed be His name, God has given it. For who could otherwise have conceived, that He who is righteous in punishing the guilty, could also be righteous in justifying those who are ungodly ? The statements would naturally have been held to be contradictory, and the one destructive of the other.

We have gained one step in this matter, when we understand what God's righteousness means in connection with the Gospel. It is just as consistent with all that He is to justify the ungodly, as it is to punish for ever the impenitent. We gain another step, when we mark the way in which Scripture speaks of it. For there are *four* catchwords, as they may be called, very helpful in the elucidation of the subject. First we read, in words already quoted from Rom. i. 17, that God's righteousness *is revealed* in the Gospel. Next, that it is now *manifested* (iii. 21). Thirdly, that it is *to be submitted to* (x. 3). And fourthly, that believers *become it* (2 Cor. v. 21). A word on these two last terms. It was a charge against Israel, that, going about to establish their own righteousness, they had not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God: that is, they would not allow God to show Himself righteous in justifying them. They would not be illustrations of it, but sought to make good a righteousness of their own. Now God, in setting His Son on high who perfectly glorified Him in life and in death, has displayed His righteousness. He was righteous in doing that. Christ on high is the righteousness of God. Believers become that in Christ. God's righteousness will be displayed in putting those who are in Christ in glory with Him. For the display of that we wait, whilst knowing it now.

From Faith to Faith.—With the outline of the subject thus before us, drawn from the Scriptures (Rom. i.

17; iii. 21; x. 3; 2 Cor. v. 21) we can understand why, in the first notice of the revelation of this righteousness, it is said to be by, or from, *i.e.*, proceeding from, or on the principle of, faith. For whilst God is, and must ever be, righteous in all that He does, saints are not to be mere spectators of His righteousness. Angels will be that. We become it; we are illustrations of it as in Christ, and that not by works of law, *i.e.*, on the principle of keeping the law; but by, or on the principle, of faith. Hence God's righteousness is said to be revealed by faith, *i.e.*, on that principle, and to faith. For it is as believers on Him, who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, that we are justified by faith. God sets before us what He would have us believe concerning the death and resurrection of His Son. We believe that, so believe on God, put our trust in Him, and He is then righteous in justifying us.

Why needed.—Of this Gospel, for it well deserves that appellation, Paul was not ashamed. It spoke of God, and it spoke of Christ. Where proclaimed, God's righteousness in justifying sinners on the principle of faith was set forth. Where received, it was God's power unto salvation. It revealed that about God which had been hitherto unknown. It set forth the perfection of the Lord's atoning sacrifice in God's eyes. It showed how mercy and truth could meet together, and righteousness and peace kiss each other. So far we have had the subject introduced. The need for the Gospel has now to be unfolded. God's wrath from heaven has been revealed "against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness" (18). The sphere of divine judgment, it may be remarked, is here restricted to men, for to them only is the Gospel of God's grace to be preached. To them a revelation of God's wrath from heaven has been made, which will embrace within its range of action both Gentiles and Jews. That wrath is against all ungodliness. This takes in the Gentiles. It is also against all unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness. This referred to the Jews, to whom a previous revelation—the law—had been vouchsafed. Such held *the truth* professedly; but if they acted contrary to it they held it in unrighteousness. All men

are responsible to God for their ways. The Gentiles are held answerable for ungodliness. Those who have a written revelation, but have not conformed to it, are liable to be called to account, as well, for unrighteousness. Hence salvation is needed. And the Gospel is God's power unto salvation. For salvation is here, as often in Paul's epistles, looked at as something in prospect.

III.

The State of the World. Chapters I. 19-III. 20.

WHAT called for the revelation of God's wrath, whether against Gentiles or against Jews—the two divisions into which, before the cross, the world was divided—has next to be unfolded. Chapters i. 19-ii. 16 treat of the former; ii. 17-iii. 20 treat of the latter; and the apostle begins with the former, assured that he would carry with him every Jewish reader.

The Gentiles.—With men after the flood is he only concerned. "The world that then was," writes Peter, referring to antediluvian times, "being overflowed with water, perished" (2 Pet. iii. 6). After that the history of man started afresh in the eight saved through the flood, being appointed by God, who blessed them to be fruitful, and to multiply, and replenish the earth (Gen. ix. 1). With God known to them as a God of power, of mercy, and of judgment, all three exemplified in the history of the flood, they were to start forth on the mission entrusted to them, having first stood around the altar erected by Noah as worshippers in common of the one true God.

How marked is the contrast between that little company and the Gentile world in Paul's day! Barbarism, savageness, ignorance of God—these with their attendant evils, rife at the date of our epistle, were not characteristics of those who emerged from the ark. Man, not God, was responsible for the condition of the Gentiles. God had provided a perpetual witness in the work of creation, and within the cognisance of all, to His eternal power and Godhead. That which may be known of God had been manifested to His creatures. Of this the psalmist sung in days of yore (Ps. xix. 1-6) pointing us to the heavenly bodies, whose forms and whose movements, unalterable by man, have a voice for all, since their line has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. Thus there was that which was known of God.

Besides this, Noah and his sons had worshipped Him. God too had blessed them, and had spoken to them (Gen. ix. 1-17). But He who is, and ever must be, the proper object for the creature's heart, ceased through the creature's wilfulness, and who can say how soon, to have His right place in that heart. Men "glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations (or, reasonings), and their foolish heart was darkened" (Rom. i. 21). Before the flood, man's will was at work—corruption characterised the race (Gen. vi. 12). After the flood, the mind worked. They became vain in their reasonings. They turned from the light. So their senseless hearts became darkened. *Darkened.* Let us mark the term—not dark. It speaks not of a primary state, but of one induced, and that by man. He was not created in that condition. He had not to grope his way out of a primeval moral chaos, with darkness all around, into the light such as is afforded us by revelation, and understanding about God. Nor was any one of that little company surrounding Noah's altar darkened in their understanding. In time man's foolish heart, we learn, became darkened, as he turned away from the only source of light and true knowledge which had once been possessed. Then priding himself on wisdom he became a fool, and idolatry was the result (i. 22, 23). The downward road is clearly traced. They "changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." They *became* fools. They *changed* the glory of God. How low did they sink, when they worshipped creeping things! How foolish to worship that which God had originally made subject to Adam!

The Down-grade.—At what date idolatry was introduced no one can now say. But if the Hebrew computation of the birth of the different post-diluvian patriarchs is correct, since Terah, Abraham's father, worshipped other gods (Joshua xxiv. 2), idolatry must have been practised, if not in the lifetime of Noah, certainly in that of Shem. If, however, we cannot fix the date of its introduction, we know the cause that led to it (Rom. i. 21). That stage of declension reached, the others were soon entered

upon. In what a solemn way are they severally noticed. *God gave them up.* "God gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts" (24). "God gave them up unto vile affections" (26). "And, as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over (or, up) to a reprobate mind" (28). Now this is history, man's moral history; but a history man would never have written of himself. Those who first entered upon the path of declension would doubtless have repudiated the possibility of any one sinking so low. Those who had sunk into it, and were living in it, would not, it is evident, have been able to trace all this out. It is man's inner, as well as his outer, history that we here contemplate. His heart, his mind, his acts are passed in review. In his heart he had turned from the proper object for the creature. In his mind he became a fool. In his acts he showed, both the need of an object outside himself, and the efforts of one who sought to supply it by worshipping different forms of animal life. And this picture of man, created originally in the image of God and made in His likeness, is presented as a faithful delineation of the Gentile world, which comprised not merely ignorant barbarians, but civilised nations, cultivated races, and educated classes. Intellectual abilities of no mean order had been developed. But where were morality and godliness to be found?

Three States.—Was there any discernment of the wickedness that was rife? There was. Some professed to judge others who did such things, yet practised the very things themselves, all the while knowing the righteous judgment, or ordinance of God, that such wickedness deserved death (i. 32). They had both a conscience, then, and a certain measure of knowledge; but they did not act up to them nor did they desire to do it. For that a new nature is requisite. We have man then here before us as a child of Adam, a natural man, condemning by the light of conscience, and of the knowledge which he possessed, much of the evil rampant around him; yet practising without remorse the very things which he condemned in another. Further on (vii.) we shall see man as a child of God, having therefore a new nature, and so right desires, yet the slave to evil which he hates. And

we shall also have presented to us man as a Christian, *i.e.* one who has received the Holy Ghost, and so is in Christ, and Christ in him, and hence has not only a new nature and right desires, but has power by the Spirit to fulfil them (vi.; viii.). In one or other of these states is every person upon earth.

The Philosophers.—To return. Of what value was such discernment? Would one such, boasting of the appellation of philosopher, pride himself on his superior knowledge? It only condemned him the more. It left him without excuse, and liable to the just judgment of God. A solemn position indeed to be in. This leads to teaching on the subject of divine judgment, in which every responsible creature is deeply concerned, prefaced however for the benefit of all with a reason, which revelation alone could give, for its apparent delay. For God's long-suffering, as Peter teaches us, is salvation (2 Pet. iii. 15). And the man, of whom Paul was writing, was really despising the riches of God's goodness, and forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads to repentance; and all the while after his hardness and impenitent heart was treasuring up unto himself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds (Rom. ii. 3-6) Utterly valueless, then, was such knowledge on which the philosopher prided himself; his life, too, making plain that he was really ignorant of the ways and purposes of God. A philosopher in ignorance! It was true. He did not know that the goodness, or kindness of God leads to repentance, and that in view of the coming day of wrath. Hence there is more for man to think of than governmental dealing on the part of God, meting out, as the heathen owned, and that righteously, temporal death (i. 32). There is the judgment which comes *after* death (Heb. ix. 27), and consequent on which the doom of the impenitent will be fixed for ever (Rom. ii 7-10). Is this too much to ask men of sense to believe? If it is acknowledged that man may deserve temporal death for his deeds, why, if he dies impenitent, seeing that he must exist for ever, is God to be thought unrighteous should He inflict on him everlasting punishment? If punish-

ment of the impenitent at all on the part of God is just, as long as such are impenitent, punishment is and must be their righteous desert.

The coming Judgment.—Now this judgment will be of men, not of cities, not of countries, not of nations, not of races. Jews and Gentiles, or rather Greeks,* as the apostle wrote, will alike be involved in it, for God will render to every man according to his deeds, be he a Christian, a Jew, or a Greek. Hence follows a statement of the immutable principles of divine justice. To those who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, honour, and immortality (or rather† incorruption), God will give eternal life. Here Christians come in. For the contentious, or factious, who obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath, indignation, tribulation and anguish, whether he be Jew or Greek; but glory, honour, and peace to every one that *worketh good*; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For there is no respect of persons with God (ii. 7-11). Privileges, then, such as the Jew enjoyed in this life will stand no one in stead in mitigation of divine punishment. Yet the creature's responsibility will be taken into account by the Judge of all the earth. "For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the (or, under) law, shall be judged by the law; for not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified" (12, 13). God will have reality; man's life, his walk, and not merely his profession, will be taken into account. Moreover, there was no need to be under the law to be a doer of it. A word this was, and an important one for the Jew, calculated to arouse in him a

* There seems force in the selection of the term *Greek* here. Of course the Greeks were Gentiles, a term which included in the New Testament all who were not Jews. But Greeks could be distinguished from Barbarians (i. 14). The Greeks as a race were civilised, and educated. If judgment concerned the professing people of God, and the more civilised and cultivated race of men, who then could escape liability to it?

† *Incorruption*, as the apostle wrote, involves resurrection of the body (1 Cor. xv. 42, 53, 54; 2 Tim. i. 10). *Immortality* would strictly mean preservation from dying at all (1 Cor. xv. 53, 54). Hence the importance here of the term *incorruption*, which is applicable to saints who die at any time.

real sense of his responsibility, and to dispel, like the bursting of a bubble, that foolish pride which puffed him up. Amongst the ranks of the Gentiles (here be it remarked the apostle reverts to the general term, which included barbarians) doers of the law might be found, as amongst the ranks of the Jews there were but too many who could only be classed as hearers of it. For the law was an expression of God's mind for His creatures. Hence a Gentile who had never heard it, never having been put under it, might show its works written in his heart, his conscience and thoughts being kept in proper exercise within him. Such an one would be justified, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to Paul's Gospel.

The secrets of men are to be judged in that day. How impossible then is it, and must it be, for human creatures in this life to form a full estimate of their neighbours. The secrets of men must be disclosed for that. Acts, words, are within the cognisance of others. But secrets there may be, known only to Him who searches the heart, and who will judge them in a coming day. To that day, when writing to the Corinthians, the apostle himself looked on, and to it he directed their attention likewise (1 Cor. iv. 1-5). At the same time—and this must ever be borne in mind—he expressed no uncertain judgment about the conduct of the offending Corinthian brother, nor of the discipline which should be carried out against him. So, on the one hand, the holiness of God's house may call for the exercise of discipline. The lack, on the other hand, of perfect acquaintance with the secrets of men should check any rash judgment of our fellows. But the secrets of men will be judged by Him whose prerogative it is to search the heart. We shall all be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ (2 Cor. v. 10).

The Jews.—From *the doers* of the law we are next turned to the *hearers* of it—the Jews, to learn what can be said of such (Rom. ii. 17-iii. 20). And this is more clearly marked as, following the best MSS., we translate "But if thou art called a Jew," etc. There was great profession among them, with loud boasting of superior knowledge (17-20). But, as with the philosopher in relation to the heathen world, what effect had such

boasting on those who indulged in it? Had it made them better? The questions put to them in vv. 21-24 indicate plainly their failure.* Were they morally better than the Gentiles? Would they glory in circumcision? Vain was that. Circumcision became uncircumcision if they were transgressors of the law. Whilst the Gentile despised as uncircumcised in flesh, would be reckoned by God as circumcised, if he kept the ordinances, or righteous requirements, of the law. Would any pride themselves on being Jews, possessors of a faultless genealogy? Let such prove themselves worthy of that name, having praise, as the word *Judah* means, and that not of men, but of God. What a blow must this have been to the pride of a Jew! but a blow struck by one who once having gloried in all that, had counted it loss for Christ (Phil. iii. 4-7). All mistaken Jewish boasting was thus cut from under their feet. Very natural, therefore, was the question which follows: "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way," is the answer: "chiefly (or first), because that unto them were committed the oracles of God" (Rom. iii. 1, 2). Before, however, recounting their privileges more in detail, of which we subsequently read in ch. ix., we, and they are taught that the Word of God must be listened to, and its sad testimony to man's failure must be adduced.

An Objector Silenced.—To this the apostle will turn, after clearing the ground of a difficulty that might be, and perhaps had been, raised by a Jew against the unwelcome announcement, that he was by his acts just as much liable to divine judgment as the most ignorant and debased among the Gentiles. Was God to falsify His character in order that the disobedient Jew might escape

* It might seem strange to accuse a jew of sacrilege, or temple plundering. Acts xix. 37, however, shows that they might be guilty of it, and Josephus proves it (*Ant.* iv. 8, 10). "Let no man blaspheme those gods which other cities esteem such; nor may any one steal what belongs to strange temples, nor take away the gifts that are dedicated to any god." This he gives as what was taught in the law, Exod. xxii. 28, or Deut. vii. 25 being, perhaps, referred to by him. If this conjecture be correct, whilst rejecting his interpretation of the law in Exodus, and his application of Deut. vii. 25, one cannot fail to gather from his words in what his countrymen were in danger of indulging.

punishment? "What," asks the apostle, "if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith (or, faithfulness) of God without effect?" (3). He must, and will be true to His word, whatever man may do. "Let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written. That thou mightest be justified in Thy sayings, and mightest overcome (or, prevail) when Thou art judged (rather, comest into judgment)" (4). God had been faithful to His word in the wilderness, when the people were unfaithful. Else, where would the nation have been? Reaping then, as they had done, national preservation through God's faithfulness to His word in the past, who were they, of all people, to question the justice of God in acting on this same principle in the future, *viz.*, faithfulness to His word, though that might involve them, as transgressors, in everlasting punishment? Would any contest the point? The apostle, to meet such, states the objection from the Jewish point of view, and disposes of it. "If our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous, who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man). God forbid; for then how shall God judge the world?" (5, 6). Shortsighted indeed was the objector, seeing the ground taken would hinder Israel's future blessing, which cannot be brought about apart from the execution of judgment on Gentiles (Ps. ix. 18-20; Joel iii. 19-21).

But there was another light in which the matter might be put, to bring home to the objector the untenableness of his position. All knew how a Jew regarded a Christian, and Paul especially. The cry of the populace at Jerusalem (Acts xxii. 22), and the language of Tertullus to Felix (Acts xxiv. 5) made it clear. Christians, of whom Stephen was an example, justly deserved, in their eyes, divine punishment, and to kill them was, they thought, to do God's service. Did they clamour for the death of such, as being under the ban of heaven, unfit to live, heinous sinners in God's sight? What inconsistency was this? For, asks the apostle, "If the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto His glory, why yet am I also judged as a sinner? And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say), Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is

just." The Jewish plea for exemption from punishment must be held then valid against the persecution of the Christian*; and further, that plea, which he would urge on his own behalf, was really a plea for the abominable doctrine which he wrongfully charged on the Christian. And, as it is not all uncommon, the very thing which he professed to repudiate, and would condemn in another, was the very thing he was really pleading for on his own behalf; *viz.*, the doing evil that good may come. Thus the tables were completely turned. It was the Jew, not the Christian, who was really the advocate for the wicked principle. So, whether the Jews looked at their past history, or at the future of their nation, or at their conduct towards Christians in Paul's day (1 Thess. ii. 15, 16), the plea they would urge for exemption from punishment must be at once and for ever abandoned, if their national aspirations were still to be cherished, and if consistency of conduct in their treatment of Christians was to be affirmed. In this masterly way was the ground cut from under their feet, and the objector definitely silenced.

God's Testimony about Man.—The ways of men, whether Jews or Gentiles, have now been looked at, and with one result. Both Jews and Gentiles were all under sin. With this the Scriptures are in accord. So each party, convicted by their own acts, are now to hear God's testimony regarding them pronounced, for the most part, and recorded in His Book, a thousand years before. Clear, sweeping, and minute it is. The throat, the tongue, the lips, the mouth, the feet, the ways, the eyes of men are severally spoken of by Him, who takes note of His creatures as employed in the service of sin (Rom. iii. 10-18.)

On three occasions since the flood has God put on record His verdict about man. The first occasion was just after Noah's exit from the ark, when only those saved through it (1 Pet. iii. 20), witnesses as they all were of the awful reality of divine punishment, were alive upon this earth (Gen. viii 18-21). The second occasion

* I am aware that the interpretation suggested above of vv. 7, 8 is not the common one. The change of pronoun from the *first* person plural to the *first* person singular leads me to adopt it, notwithstanding what has been urged against it.

was in the reign of David (Ps. xiv). The third was in the lifetime of the apostle. On the first occasion it was thereby made plain, that man's nature is not changed by the assurance that God punishes the impenitent. On the second occasion "the Lord," we read, "looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God." The result of the investigation is recorded. "They are all gone aside, they are together become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Yet for upwards of four hundred years Israel had possessed a written revelation, and had been in the enjoyment of the land of their inheritance. For all that they were no better. The possession of God's Word, and the enjoyment of special favours from Him left man where they found him. "There is none that doeth good, no, not one" was the divine announcement in that age. On the third occasion, that in the lifetime of Paul, the fitting description of man for his day was found in the language, chiefly of David, recorded many centuries before the cross. With the advantages then, both of a divine revelation in the law of Moses, and of a prophetic ministry from the days of Samuel to those of John the Baptist, with all the learning too of the philosophers, man in nature, whether Jew or Gentile, was unchanged in his ways and desires. There was no fear of God before his eyes (Ps. xxxvi. 1). Man's history and God's Word are found in agreement as to this. But one great importance of the testimony of the latter was, that it convicted the Jew as much as the Gentile. "We know that what things soever the law* saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before (or, what is more correct, be brought under the judgment of) God. Therefore (or, because) by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. iii. 19, 20). With admirable skill, as only one guided of the Holy Ghost could do it,

* The reader may observe that "the law" here is not confined to the Pentateuch, not one of the quotations given being from the writings of Moses. The apostle uses the term in its fundamental sense of instruction, and so applies it to the Psalms and the prophets. See for other instances John x. 34; xv. 25; 1 Cor. xiv. 21.

the solemn indictment was drawn up, both Jews and Gentiles being adduced as witnesses of its accuracy against themselves in a way they could not resist (i. 32; ii. 1-3; 21-23); whilst God's righteousness in taking vengeance is asserted in a manner which none could gainsay. Men were left, as far as they were concerned, without any shelter from judgment, and without an answer if brought into it. What hope for them was there left? It is here the Gospel comes in, and now the apostle proceeds to expound it, the Scriptures which the Jew held in his hand having condemned him most completely.

Paul had spoken of the righteousness of God in connection with judgment as that which was beyond dispute—a matter about which he would not stop to argue. The heathen really acknowledged it (i. 32). The Jew counted on its display against the Gentiles, as the prelude to his final blessing under the peaceful reign of the coming King. The principle then was admitted by both, and the Scriptures proved, as we have seen, that none could claim exemption from judgment. All the world was brought under the judgment of God. But how far astray are man's thoughts about God. Man assumes, as if it were unquestionable, that God must act in mercy with His sinful creatures; so that to punish any of them for ever would be unreasonable and unjust. Thus God's prerogative to act in righteousness is called in question. Yet He must always act in righteousness in dealing with His creatures, His nature being unchangeable. Hence, unless He can act righteously in grace, to nothing but everlasting punishment can the sinner look forward. Now this last point did need elucidation, and that is afforded us. So we approach next the unfolding of the Gospel of God, as set forth in the Epistle to the Romans; and this great subject divides itself, as we have already remarked, into three great parts, *viz.*: A freedom from the guilt of sin; B, freedom from the power of sin, and C, freedom from the presence of sin.

A. *Freedom from the Guilt of Sin, Chapters* iii. 21-v. 11.

IV.

The Justifier and the Justified.
Chapters III. 21-IV. 25.

Justification and Forgiveness. — Teaching about justification is now commenced. For nothing short of that establishes a soul in the enjoyment of peace with God (v. 1), yet nothing less does God desire and provide for every one who believes on Him. Hence it may be remarked that it is justification, and not forgiveness of sins, on which the apostle here dilates. Forgiveness is assumed as known and enjoyed, and is only mentioned twice in the whole epistle (iv. 7; xi. 27). How Paul could preach that we learn in the Acts, and in connection with it he there introduced the subject of justification (Acts xiii. 38, 39), which, when known, as he shows us in Rom viii. 33, ministers to the soul the consciousness of perfect quietness under every charge that the accuser, whoever he may be, can bring against the believer, so that in holy boldness he stands before God's throne. Now on this truth, as distinct from that of forgiveness, there was need to dwell. To forgive an offender tells of mercy and goodness on the part of him who does it. To justify a person implies righteousness on the part of the justifier. But to justify, or reckon righteous, an ungodly person may seem to human thought inconsistent with the first principles of righteousness. Accordingly justification is treated of methodically, and fully; first in connection with the Justifier (iii. 21-31), then in connection with those justified (iv.); after which blessings are enumerated which are consequent upon it, and in which those justified by faith have part (v. 1-11).

How fitting is this. For the first question, and a momentous one, must surely be. Is He who justifies righteous in thus acting? Now the Justifier is God. For we read, " Now the righteousness of God without (or, apart

from) the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all them* that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth a mercy seat† (rather than, propitiation) through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission (better, passing over) of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God: to declare, *I say*, at this time, His righteousness: that He might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (iii. 21-26).

Witness of the Law and the Prophets.—God's righteousness, then, has been manifested, and thank God for it,—righteousness acting in grace, righteousness apart from law, which last could only award to man what he deserved according to his works. But though apart from law, it was witnessed by the law and the prophets. By the law, inasmuch as by sacrifices enjoined in the Mosaic ritual God acted in grace towards sinners. By the prophets, since through them the time of full, though future, blessing on earth was by the Holy Ghost announced. Thus it was that there was a testimony to God's acting in grace throughout all the time from Moses to the cross. How interesting must it have been to any Christian, formerly a Jew, to have light thus cast on the Old Testament Scriptures. Interesting, too, is it to every true saint, as he sees by the teaching of the Spirit what was really to be found in the revelations of the former dispensation. A testimony has been borne all along to God's righteousness in connection with His grace. The ground, however, on which He would be

* The best Uncial MSS. omit "and upon all." The context confirms the correctness of this, for the apostle is writing of those who are justified (24).

† The only other place in the New Testament where the term *hilasterion* occurs is Heb. ix. 5. There it certainly means the mercy seat. And in the LXX it is more commonly used of the mercy seat, only indeed of that in the Pentateuch. It is best then to take the term here in the same sense in which the apostle uses it in Heb. ix. and not to confound it with that used for propitiation, of which Heb ii. 17, 1 John ii. 2, iv. 10 treat.

proved righteous, waited for its revelation the coming and death of His Son. It is by faith of Jesus Christ, and so is unto all them that believe. Every one, whether he was formerly a Jew or a Gentile, who now believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, has part in the blessings connected with this display of divine righteousness.

We have already spoken of this righteousness (p. 13). But what force there is in the phrase—"righteousness of God." It tells us of Him with whom we have to do, and assures the guilty one, just when he needs it, that God can in perfect righteousness receive him and justify him. Different interpretations, however, have been given of this phrase, for the most part resolving themselves into the thought of a righteousness which God can accept, something offered to Him on behalf of sinners. Nothing of that kind does it mean. Nor would anything of that kind really settle matters. For the important question would still remain, Is He, and how can He be, righteous in allowing vicarious righteousness to be reckoned to the sinner? But when we take the words simply, and understand that, just as the wrath of God means God's wrath, so the righteousness of God means God's righteousness, we see, as has been before remarked (but the importance of the point must excuse the recurring to it) that it is something about God of which the sacred writer is treating, and seeking to impress on his readers, *viz.*, that to those who have sinned God can act in the fullest grace consistently with all that He is in Himself, yea, that He is righteous in so doing. What confidence can this impart! God righteous in justifying a wretch like me! some one may say. Yes, we have to reply, if you believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead (iv. 24). And if He is righteous in doing that now, He will be righteous in that for ever. No thought is there of compromising any of the divine attributes. No room is there, no need for striving after our own righteousness, were it possible to attain to it. If God is righteous in justifying the sinner, it must be of pure grace. Let us listen then, and learn how He has been pleased to manifest His righteousness of which the Holy Ghost in this epistle speaks.

Christ a Mercy Seat.—God hath set forth Christ a

propitiatory, or mercy seat, through faith in His blood. The mention of the mercy seat here, the same word that we have in Heb. ix. 5, leaving therefore no real doubt as to what the apostle meant all to understand, carries us back in thought, as it doubtless did the readers of the Septuagint in Paul's day, to the tabernacle in the wilderness, and especially to Lev. xvi., in which alone we find the ritual for the day of atonement. On that day Aaron approached the mercy seat, and sprinkled thereon the blood of the bullock, and of the goat, and left it there under the searching eye of the Holy God. Now the mercy seat was the place of God's throne upon earth. From thence He spoke to Moses (Numb. vii. 89), and there upon the cherubim He was said to sit (1 Sam. iv. 4; 2 Sam. vi. 2; 2 Kings xix. 15; 1 Chron. xiii. 6; Ps. lxxx. 1; Ps. xcix. 1; Isa. xxxvii. 16), His earthly seat, or throne (Ezek. xliii. 7). The blood of the sin offering sprinkled thereon, and left there, was the abiding witness that God had been glorified, propitiation made, and hence that He could accept before Him, a people who had sinned. By that blood the claims of divine holiness and righteousness had been typically met. So God was righteous in dealing with His people in grace. But now the true sacrifice has been offered up, propitiation for sins has been made, and atonement has been fully effected. God therefore points us to Christ, whom He has set forth a mercy seat through faith in His blood, to declare (*lit.*, for the showing forth of) His righteousness in the past as well as in the present. In the past, inasmuch as He is thereby shown to have been righteous in passing over sins in days anterior to the cross. In the present, since He is also shown to be righteous in justifying those who believe on Jesus. Propitiation has been made, and God points all to His Son as the proof of it, just as the mercy seat with the blood on it attested that it had been typically accomplished. Truly then may we say in the language of the Psalmist, Righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

A Double Purpose.—Now this reference to Lev. xvi. served a double purpose. We learn by it of what that annual service was typical. We learn also how efficacious is the blood of Christ in God's eyes, seeing that, till it

was presented to Him, justification by blood was a truth unknown. With the blood of no other, no lesser sacrifice, is justification connected in the World. And none other now is needed. Of old, as Aaron and his successors in the high priestly office sprinkled of the blood on the mercy seat, God *passed over* (25) the sins of His people. Now that the blood of Christ has been shed, and is ever before Him, propitiation having been made in the holiest by Christ as High Priest (Heb. ii. 17), God can justify ungodly ones. An important difference. And this distinction sheds a light on the selection by the Spirit in the Old Testament Scriptures of the Hebrew verb *caphar, to cover*, which, in the *Piel* voice *chipper*, is used to express the making atonement, the sins for which atonement typically was made being literally covered over as it were, not taken away (1 John iii. 5). Covered over as it were by the blood, God in forbearance passed over them on that day, waiting for the true sacrifice in virtue of the blood of which sins could be fully and for ever put away. Now since that blood has been shed, and sprinkled as it were on His throne, He is shown to be just when He reveals Himself as "the Justifier of him which believeth (or, hath faith) in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 26).

God the Justifier.—The need for this was great, and universal: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." As to this there is no difference. Men, not Belshazzar only, have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting. One there was, and only One who could say without reserve, "I have glorified Thee on the earth, having finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do" (John xvii. 4). Of all else the verdict is, they "have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii. 23). Hence nothing will meet their case save the "being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (24). But who asked for this? Who pleaded for this? No one. God in His grace and in accordance with His love has provided that, for which no creature, conscious of its failure, would ever have petitioned. One could fancy a cry going up for forgiveness, that the deserved punishment might be averted. But who, one asks, could dream of a sinner with any sense of the enormity of his guilt, seriously asking the

Judge of all the earth to justify him freely by His grace? God, however, can do, and does, what men could never have supposed. Hence He has revealed Himself as the Justifier of ungodly creatures.

The Law established.—What shall we say then, but heartily echo the apostle's words, "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore (or, For), we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: seeing* it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by (or, on the principle of) faith, and uncircumcision through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: "yea, we establish the law" (iii. 27-31). *Establish the law*! yes. The law set forth God's requirements from His creature, man. The creature failed to respond to it. How was the majesty of the law to be upheld? Suppose there had been, though it really was impossible, a vicarious fulfilment of the law on behalf of the offender. In that case, it is plain, the penalty demanded by the law for any infraction of it would never have been paid. Then it would have been broken with impunity, and no sacrifice would have been needed. For, as we read in Gal. ii. 21, "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." For if that had been possible, His life, not His death, would have met the need. Thus vicarious obedience of it by any one is definitely excluded. This is a very important point in Christian teaching. On the other hand, "through faith," writes the apostle, "we establish the law." The creature has broken it. He is brought in guilty. He has no righteousness of his own established by his observance of it, or by that of another on his behalf. Judgment is deserved, and judgment must be borne. That, when borne, maintains the authority of the law. So here substitution can come in without weakening one iota of the law's requirements. The blood of Christ bears witness to the death of the substitute. A *vicarious sacrifice* has been found, when *vicarious*

* Another reading, and which is adopted by the Revised Version thus runs, "If so be that God is one, and He shall justify," etc.

obedience was impossible. God's holiness and righteousness are thus maintained, and God is seen to be righteous in justifying the ungodly through faith.

The Subjects of Justification.—Thus far as to the *Justifier*. The apostle next proceeds to treat of those *justified*, and to *four* points in connection with this part of the subject is our attention directed. 1st. The principle on which any one can be justified. 2nd. The moral class which can share in this favour. 3rd. The limits in the human family to which such a blessing extends. 4th. The testimony set before us, believing which we can share in this grace.

The Principle.—As the first of these, God we read justifies the ungodly through *faith*, and the earliest example of this is found in Abraham. "What shall we then say that Abraham our forefather as pertaining to the flesh hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before (or, toward) God" (iv. 1, 2). Now it is clear that he was justified by works, as James (ii. 21) reminds us; but in that he could not boast before God. For his being justified by works was after all but the witness that he he had done his duty, as he had been commanded. If Abraham then was only justified by works, however he might have boasted before men, he must have been dumb before God, included, as he was, in the verdict brought in against men, "that all have sinned," and that "there is none righteous, no, not one." But "what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 3). He was then justified on the principle of faith. His faith was *counted*, or *reckoned to him* for righteousness. How instructive is the language when pondered over. "To him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt." Such an one would claim to be righteous. He would not need *to be reckoned* righteous. "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (iv. 4. 5). The kernel of this part of the Gospel is found embedded in the history of Abraham. That night, so fruitful in blessing to Jews, is fruitful in instruction to us; and though nineteen centuries were to run by ere

the Gospel times could begin, we are taken back by the Spirit of God to that time in the patriarch's history (Gen. xv.) to see therein illustrated the simplicity of faith, and what results from such an exercise of it. "Abraham believed God." How much is expressed in these words!

The Class.—2nd. What is the moral class which can share in this favour? The *ungodly* is the answer, and we are turned for a fitting example of this to David's history, whose words are quoted in proof of it (iv. 7, 8): "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." Justification by faith then is no new procedure on God's part, nor is it a new thing that He should justify one who is ungodly; a precedent for each can be quoted from the Old Testament, precedents which a Jew would be the last to gainsay. And the precedent of David is particularly useful, because it shows, that one guilty of wilful sin, as he was, could nevertheless come to rejoice in the non-imputation of guilt of which he had been convicted.

Partakers of it.—3rd. But who can share in this? Again we are turned to Abraham's history for an answer, which should effectually silence the cavillings of those who would Judaize. Now there were two articles in the creed of such in Paul's day, to which they clung tenaciously, and pressed most persistently; the one, that a Gentile must keep the law of Moses to be justified (Gal. v. 4); the other that they must be circumcised, if they would be saved (Acts xv. 1). Both these contentions were refuted by the history of the patriarch. Abraham was justified by faith, centuries before the law was given by Moses. He was also justified by faith, and since that was the case, he was certainly saved, years before he was circumcised (Gen. xv. 6; xvii. 26). Neither the keeping of the law, then, nor the submission to the rite of circumcision are needful for any one to be justified by faith. Hence it was plain that Gentiles could share in the grace of justification just as much as Jews. And if the latter could boast of having Abraham for their father, so could the former. Abraham was the "father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised," as well

as " the father of circumcision, to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised " (Rom. iv. 11, 12). Did this shock Jewish prejudices? Careful study of the Word would settle it all beyond the possibility of dispute (13-17). Indeed, keeping to the ground of the law, or putting people under it for Christian blessing, was, as far as they were concerned, the way to lose all. Faith in that case would become void, and the promise be made of none effect (14). So little perception had those people of the baneful effect of such teaching.

The Testimony.—We pass on now to the 4th point: *viz.*, the testimony to be believed in order to share now in such grace. Again we are reminded of Abraham's case, and the parallel and contrast between him and us are clearly marked. Abraham believed God. We are to believe on God, *i.e.*, to have confidence in Him. So far the parallel. Abraham believed God's promise about his seed—" So shall thy seed be." Hence he trusted to God as the God who can *quicken* the dead. We are to believe God's testimony about the death and resurrection of His Son, having faith in Him as the One who *raises* the dead, even " Jesus our Lord, who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification (*lit.*, our justifying.)" Abraham believed God, " being fully persuaded, that what He had promised, He was able also to perform. Therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him: but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead " (21-25). Righteousness was imputed, or reckoned, to Abraham. Righteousness on the same principle, *i.e.*, of faith, is imputed, or reckoned to us.

Now for the first time in this section of the Gospel of God do we meet with a reference to the Lord's resurrection. In the previous chapter (iii.) we have been reminded of His *blood*, for it is that which meets the claims of a divine holiness. Here (iv.) we are told of His resurrection. " He was raised for our justifying," *i.e.*, that we might be justified by faith. For it is in consequence of His resurrection that we know God has accepted His sacrifice on

our behalf. The blood speaks to God, the resurrection speaks to us. Hence the force of the expression—"raised for our justifying," for it is an effect future to His resurrection. For we are justified by faith.

V.

Blessings Connected with Justification.

Chapter V. 1-11.

THUS far we have been taught about the Justifier (iii.), and also we have learnt who those are who can be justified (iv.). Now we are to hear of blessings connected with justification by faith (v.). The Lord Jesus, as we have remarked, was raised for our *justifying* (iv. 25), which is here viewed as an event subsequent to, and consequent on, His resurrection. Not that His resurrection was needed for God to justify us *meritoriously*. That rests on Christ's blood (v. 9). But as righteousness is imputed to us, who *believe* on God who raised up His Son from the dead, to His resurrection we are turned, the witness to us of God's acceptance of His atoning sacrifice, that we may believe on Him, the raiser-up of His Son, and so be justified. Hence follows the conclusion, "Therefore being justified *by faith*." The Lord's resurrection was needful for our justifying.* Believing on God who raised Him, we are justified by faith like Abraham of old. But before entering further on this subject we would direct attention to the accuracy of language in chapters iii. iv., and also to the use made by the Holy Ghost of Old Testament Scripture in teaching on the Gospel of God.

God imputes Righteousness.—It should be observed that whilst we meet with the phrase the righteousness of God in chapter iii. the apostle never once mentions it in chapter iv., although eight times in that chapter the word righteousness occurs. This, when noticed, is helpful in the understanding of the subject. The righteousness of God, as treated of in the Romans, it has been already remarked, speaks of God's consistency with Himself,

* The word here used by the apostle, *dikaiosis*, speaks of the act of justifying. "The *meritum*," says Meyer, "lay in His death; but the *raising Him up* took place for the *dikaiosis*" (justifying) "in which His *meritum* was to be realised in the faithful."

i.e., it is a divine attribute. Now it is plain that though a divine attribute may be manifested, it cannot be imputed to a creature. Hence, where the subject in hand is God imputing righteousness, as in chapter iv., the apostle does not name *God's* righteousness. God could impute righteousness to Abraham. He imputes it likewise to us, who believe on Him as the raiser-up of His Son from the dead, *i.e.*, *He reckons us righteous*. But He is not said to impute to any His righteousness.* He shows it, however, in reckoning us righteous.

Then how interesting it is, and instructive to notice the opening-up by the Spirit of God of the bearing of His Word in past ages on the Gospel now preached. To the Prophet Habakkuk we have been turned for the divine announcement that "the just shall live by faith." To the Psalms, and to the Prophets, have we been directed in chapter iii. to prove the need of grace on God's part, if any of the children of men are to be blessed. Next we have been reminded of the typical teaching of the service of the high priest in the holiest on the day of atonement. Then Abraham's history, as given us in Genesis xv. and xvii., is found in point after point to be illustrative of God's present dealings in grace. Nor must we forget the reference to David's experience recorded in Psalm xxxii. Now all this we should remember was put on record centuries before the Gospel of the grace of God was revealed and preached, yet not before it was planned as part of the divine purpose. Chosen in Christ, as we were before the foundation of the world (Ephes. i. 4), the Gospel was ever before the mind of God in all time, so that His revelations, and His dealings in the past are found to be in harmony with His gracious purpose, and can be adduced, as illustrative at times of the need of it, and at times of the principles of it. One further remark before proceeding. When dilating on

* To the remark above, Phil. iii. 9, when rightly understood, presents no contradiction. "The righteousness which is of God" in that passage is contrasted with that "which is of (or from) the law." It speaks of what is *from* God, not of that which belongs to Him, a divine attribute. It is the righteousness reckoned to us of Romans iv., not "God's righteousness" of Romans iii., to which the apostle there refers.

the righteousness of God attention is called to the blood of Christ; when dilating on who those are who can be justified, attention is directed to the history of Abraham, and to the recorded utterances of David.

Blessings.—We may pass on now to consider the blessings enumerated in connection with our justification. And first, of *peace*. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God"* (v. 1). A short but wonderful statement, telling us of the gracious desire of our God.

A word on *peace*. There are three statements about it, each expressing something which the believer is privileged to enjoy. 1st Peace *with* God. 2nd. The peace of *Christ*. 3rd. The peace *of* God. The first concerns the conscience, the second the heart, and the third is to garrison the heart. The *first*, peace with God, the believer has consequent on being justified by faith, and it rests on the knowledge that every question between God and the guilty one has been settled, and settled for ever, by the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. The consciousness of guilt makes the sinner afraid of God, as Adam confessed (Gen. iii. 10), "I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." The knowledge of the Lord's resurrection for our justifying, having been first delivered for our offences, assures us that all is settled; hence, justified by faith, we have peace with God. The *second*, the peace of Christ is Christ's *gift* to His people (John xiv. 27). It is what He enjoyed on earth in the midst of all that He passed through in His testimony for God, and it is to rule in our hearts (Col. iii. 15).† The *third*, the peace *of* God, reminds us of the unruffled atmosphere in which He dwells. This He has *promised* shall guard the heart of each weak, tried, and it may be persecuted saint, who in simplicity and reality unburdens his heart to God in

* "We have peace with God," so reads the Authorised Version. Another reading, in behalf of which what is called diplomatic evidence greatly predominates, is adopted by the Revised Version. This gives to the sentence a hortatory sense, "let us have peace with God." Whichever reading is followed this important truth remains unaffected, that peace with God is consequent on justification by faith.

† The reader should note that the apostle wrote to the Colossians, "Let the peace of Christ (not, God) rule in your hearts."

prayer (Phil. iv. 7).

Peace with God.—But the subject in Romans is peace *with* God. This is the blessed portion of every one who believes on Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, and who therefore is justified by *faith*. Now it is clear that in this line of blessing one can proceed no further. Peace is peace. It is not a measure of it that is spoken of, but peace itself, to which of course nothing can be added for its increase. It is a consequence, or fruit of justification by faith, and is ours through our Lord Jesus Christ. It is therefore of course to be distinguished from it though both we are taught come to us through our Lord Jesus Christ; for we read, "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand" (v. 2). *This* grace, let us mark it, writes the apostle. Not simply grace, as it seems sometimes to be quoted, but *this* grace, the demonstrative pronoun pointing to something definite, something surely with which the reader has been already made acquainted, not something which is to be introduced in a subsequent part of the epistle. To what grace then does the apostle refer? To answer this we turn to iii. 24, and there read, "Being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." It is, then, the favour, or grace of being justified, into which we have had access, and so still enjoy (for it is the *perfect* tense that is used), and that through our Lord Jesus Christ. In that we stand, and stand for ever. So here again the *perfect* tense is employed, reminding all of the *permanence* of the standing. It abides for ever.

Standing.—At this juncture, then, of the opening-up of the Gospel the thought of *standing* is introduced. As yet we have had brought out what the Lord has done *for* us, not a word about our being *in* Him, though, on this last, the apostle, in the development of his subject, will dwell at considerable length farther on. But the truth of our standing before God is dependent on the sacrificial death of Christ *for* us, and not on our having died *with* Him. So, as we read, it is *through* Him, not by being *in* Him, that we have had access into this grace wherein we stand, blessed and true as our being in Him also is. The correctness of this may be verified, if the reader

searches that part of the Word which treats of our being in Christ. He will find, where that is the theme, that our standing before God is never once mentioned. The importance too of this will be apprehended, as he sees the light this casts on the efficiency and sufficiency of the atoning death of the Lord *for* us. For as it is through our Lord Jesus Christ that we have peace with God, so it is through Him also that we have a permanent standing before the throne of God. For the justifying of ungodly people, we need hardly remark, is a judicial action on God's part, and our standing is connected directly with that.

The Future.—Peace with God. Justified by God. What favours are these! Yet more have to be enumerated. So we next read of rejoicing (or glorying) in hope of the glory of God (2); of rejoicing too (or glorying) in tribulations (3); and lastly of rejoicing (or glorying) in God (11). But as is so often the case in Scripture we are taken at once on to the future—the hope of the glory of God. To the time when that will be displayed, saints have in all ages been turned. The Lord is coming in the glory of His Father with all the holy angels. The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together (Isa. xl. 5). A day to be dreaded by the impenitent, a day of gladness to God's saints. To be dreaded by the former, because it will be to them the precursor of judgment: a day of gladness to the latter, who desire the advent of the kingdom in power, and who look to be presented faultless before the presence of God's glory with exceeding joy (Jude 24), and to be in glory with their Lord and Saviour (John xvii. 22, 23). How perfect then is that sacrifice, God's acceptance of which is made known to us by the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead! For by it the conscience gets set at rest; an abiding standing before God for those once guilty is secured; and the glory of God becomes a subject of well-grounded hope.

The Present.—The future then is sure. But what about the way to it? Can the Lord's sacrifice shed a light on that also, and administer encouragement to the saint in his path through this world? It can. It does. And he who had already suffered for Christ, short then

of martyrdom, as few if any had (Acts ix. 16; 2 Cor. xi. 23-33), here assures us, that we can "rejoice (or glory) in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us" (Rom. v. 3-5). There is a manifest fitness, all will feel, in such testimony coming from the Apostle Paul. What indeed was the love of God to him! How had grace wrought in him! He tells us here what he had learnt by his sufferings for Christ: *viz.*, the right and healthy effects of tribulations on the saint, as he has just told us some of the blessed consequences for us of the Lord's death and resurrection. "Tribulation worketh patience." The spirit which naturally would get chafed and ruffled, bows to endure the trial. Enduring it, the saint is tested, proved; for, "blessed," writes James (i. 12) "is the man that *endureth* temptation," or trial. And Peter assures us (1 Pet. i. 7), that the trial of our faith is much more precious than that of gold which perisheth, though that gold has been tried by the fire, and so purged from all dross. The most precious thing of earth is not to be compared in God's eyes with the proved faith of His saints. The saint proved by endurance is sustained by hope, which will not fail of its accomplishment; for deliverance from trials, and that is the object of hope in v. 4, must come. Of that he is assured, because the love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto us.

The Gift of the Spirit.—Here for the first time in the epistle do we meet with a notice of the gift of the Holy Ghost, a gift given to all them that obey God (Acts v. 32), and bestowed on such consequent on the death, resurrection, and ascension also of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now this gift is needful for the Christian's walk and service on earth; needful is it, too, in order that the saint may be Christ's (Rom. viii. 9, 10), and be a member of the Body of Christ (1 Cor. xii. 12, 13). Much flows to us from the possession of it. But it should be remarked, that not a word about it is uttered, till the believer's perfect standing before God on the ground of the blood of Christ has been set before us. The standing before

God's throne rests for the believer on the sacrifice being accepted. The receiving the Holy Ghost rests on his obeying God. The believer is sealed with the Spirit when he has heard the word of truth, the Gospel of his salvation (Eph. i. 13). It is very important for a clear apprehension of the Gospel to keep these great lines of truth distinct in the mind; and that we shall only do, as we observe, and remember how, and when, they are treated of in the volume of inspiration. So the introduction of the gift of the Spirit in this place, coming in, as it does, after justification by faith has been treated of, but before the truth and the effects of our being in Christ are brought out, is very helpful. A man justified by faith is, and must be, indwelt by the Spirit; but justification by faith is not a consequence of the gift of the Spirit. They are concurrent blessings.

By the Spirit given to us the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. We thus know His love, and can enjoy it. A divine provision this is for the saints by the way. Shall we be always on the way, and never reach the end of the journey? Shall we be always in trials, and never get free from them? Could He who loves us leave us always in them? Impossible! His love assures us as to that, and, remembering when and how it was displayed, who could doubt it? "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." Ungodly. Then we did not deserve such favour. Without strength. Then a title to it none of us could earn. Moreover, it was love such as man would naturally never have shown to his fellow. "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His own* love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." The conclusion to be drawn is clear, and is plainly stated. "Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life," *i.e.*, because He lives. And yet more. "We also joy, (or, boast,) in God through our

* There is a force and a sweetness in the pronoun, *His own*, here.

Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation" (6-11). He gave His Son for us. He justified us by the blood of Christ. He has shed abroad His love in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. Full deliverance must await us. It could not be otherwise. If justified by the blood of Christ and reconciled by His death, final salvation is certain, since He lives. God is then for us. We rejoice, or boast in Him through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation. For reconciliation, not atonement, the apostle wrote.

Justified by Blood.—We must pause, and dwell for a few moments on some important truths now mentioned, *viz.*, *Justification by the blood of Christ*, and *reconciliation with God*. We are justified by the blood of Christ. This carries us back in thought to iii. 25, "whom God hath set forth a mercy seat through faith in His blood." To His blood are we turned, as has been already remarked, when the righteousnes of God displayed in justifying is the theme. It is that which has glorified God, the witness of the death of His Son, His life given up, who has borne divine judgement for us, His life given up in obedience to God (John xiv. 31), yet voluntarily surrendered, freely offered (John x. 17, 18). For the life of the flesh is the blood (Lev. xvii. 14) given to make atonement for the soul. By that blood we are justified *meritoriously* before God. He needed nothing more to show Himself righteous in justifying ungodly ones. Hence we shall be saved from wrath through Christ. The wrath already revealed (Rom. i. 18) will be poured out at the appointed time; but believers await the coming of God's Son from heaven, who delivers them from the wrath to come (1 Thess. i. 10). And this is the fruit of divine love, now shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given to us. We need the sense of that love when in trials and difficulties in our Christian career: and can find immense comfort as we remember how and when it was shown to us. *How*? By Christ dying for us. *When*? When we were without strength, ungodly, sinners, and enemies. Under such circumstances was it shown, and now God commends His own love to us, telling us for the joy and confidence of the heart that

while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. If, then, God's love was shown by Christ dying on our behalf who now believe on Him, final salvation will certainly be ours. Of this there can be no doubt; for "if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Rom. v. 10).

Reconciliation.—Fresh truth thus comes before us. We are *reconciled* to God. Man was estranged from Him, an enemy in his mind by wicked works (Col. i. 21). The Gospel of God's grace is the weapon employed to remove that enmity. The agents used in this work are for the most part those who have been reconciled to God themselves, to whom a ministry of reconciliation has been given, and to whom also the word of reconciliation is entrusted (2 Cor. v. 18-21). And the truth which has power in that service is the *death* of God's Son. If we think of the claims of God's holiness and righteousness we turn to the *blood* of Christ. If we think of what it is that can appeal in power to the human heart, we learn that it is *the death of God's Son*. The Person who died, His relation to God, and the fact that He laid down His life for sinners, it is this which can touch the heart, and dispel for ever all the creature's enmity to, and estrangement from God. Paul had evidently learnt this, and the Colossian saints had proved it likewise (Col. i. 21, 22).

But there is more embraced in this subject. Things in heaven and things on earth will be reconciled in a coming day. For it pleased all fulness to dwell in Christ, and having made peace by the blood of the cross to reconcile all things unto itself, but limiting the all things to what are in heaven and on the earth (Col. i. 20). All intelligent creatures, then, will not be reconciled. Those under the earth of Phil. ii. 10—the lost; who will bow at the mention of the name of Jesus—are never said to be reconciled at all. Beyond the things in heaven, and upon earth, and the saints, reconciliation is not said to extend. And whilst of the first two it is spoken of as still future, of the saints it is a present thing. All things in heaven and upon earth will by-and-by be brought into order. Saints through the removal of their heart's estrangement are reconciled now to God, are in their right mind before

Him (Mark v. 15).

Rejoicing in God.—The last blessing consequent on justification has been already referred to. Yet, though last in the order of enumeration, it is by no means to be reckoned as the least of them. We joy, or boast, in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Were it not for Him, that could never have been the case. But He, the only begotten Son, has declared God, and revealed the Father (John i. 18; Matt. xi. 27). God is for us. We know it, and hence we can joy in Him. Our cup, we may say, runs over (Ps. xxiii. 5). We have received the reconciliation. Now the need of this last attests the state of the creature's heart, a state the consequence of sin within him. Man, then, is a sinner. He has in him a nature which produces estrangement from God. How was this condition engendered? For man was created in innocence. And what provision is there that we should not any longer serve sin? These are important questions. It is of these that the second part of the Gospel of God is designed to treat. To that we are now invited to give heed.

B. *Freedom from the Power of Sin. Chapters* v. 12-vii. 25.

VI.

Headship of Race. Chapter V. 12-21.

ENTERING upon this branch of the Gospel of God, we find that sin, not sins, is the subject before us, and fruitfulness for God, not peace of conscience, is an end in view. It is the sinful nature, and not the acts—what we are, our condition, not what we have done, which has now to be considered. Hence to the *death* of Christ, not to His *blood*, attention is directed, the latter being not once named throughout this section of the epistle. The difference between *sin* and *sins*, what is in us, and what we do, is of course clear and also important for us to notice. And the methodical treatment of the whole subject becomes, as we progress, apparent. For, writing to instruct those who have sinned against God, and therefore deserved everlasting punishment, the first and most pressing question was that affecting the conscience, in order that the individual might be assured of justification before God. The question settled, as we have seen, and treated by the apostle in no perfunctory manner, the saint, having peace with God, is free in spirit to learn about the really deeper question, *viz.*, concerning his evil nature derived through the fall, and about God's provision through the death of His Son that he should no longer yield himself to its control, but walk as freed from its thraldom. In the pursuit of this subject we are again reminded of Old Testament history, and get teaching in connection with it: being taken back now, not to David not to Abraham, but to Adam, the head of the race, through whom it was that sin entered into the world.

The Two Heads of Races.—There is but one human family viewed after the order of nature, and one head of the race. With him by natural generation we are all connected. Adam is that head. He fell, and the consequences of his fall affected not himself only, but all his posterity likewise; and indeed, as we shall see further on,

this creation also. By him "sin entered into the world, and death by sin." *Sin*, let the reader remark, not merely *sinning*, but sin itself, that which is defined in 1 John iii. 4, when rightly translated, as *lawlessness*, by Adam entered into the world, henceforth to dwell in man, and to weigh heavily on this creation. And by sin came death. The introduction of both is here traced up to him, so they were both on earth antecedent to the giving of the law; and this is evident, since death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression. Here for the understanding of the passage the difference between a *sinner* and a *transgressor* should be noted. A good deal depends on this. Adam was a transgressor, for he had disobeyed a positive command. All his posterity were sinners, though all of them were not like him transgressors (Hos. vi. 7, margin). For a law makes a man a transgressor, whether there be a code as the Mosaic, or a single command as in Adam's case. Now sin is not imputed when there is no law.* Yet all men were sinners, and death reigning was a proof of it. Hence it is plain that the act of the head of the race may, and in Adam's case did, affect all his race. Now there is another head, and that of another race. Of Him Adam, we are told, was a figure, or literally a *type*, even Him who is elsewhere called the second Man and the last Adam (1 Cor. xv. 45, 47). The second Man, since all others born of woman are ranged according to nature under Adam's headship. The last Adam, seeing that there will not be another race, nor another head of a race. Now since the doctrine that the race shares in the consequences of the act of its head is undeniable in Adam's case and in all connected with him, can that doctrine be extended to the

* A man could be a sinner without being a transgressor. "Whosoever doeth sin, doeth also lawlessness: and sin is lawlessness" (1 John iii. 4). Cain, for instance, sinned when he slew Abel, yet we could not say he transgressed any commandment; for none against murder, that we know of, had then been given. Lawlessness is *sin*, not of necessity *transgression*. It is the activity of a will which is not subject to God's will. Every such action of the human will deserves punishment, though, as not the breaking of a positive commandment, it is not imputed to a man as the infraction of something which had been enjoined upon him.

second Man, and to the race connected with Him? Analogy would suggest that it *might* be so. Revelation assures us that it *is* so, as we shall now see.

The Resulting Effects.—Whilst, however, the principle applicable to the one case is found to be equally so to the other, the resulting effects in the latter are not merely equal to those in the former, but go far beyond them. The *principle* is, that the race is affected beneficially or otherwise by the conduct of its head. The *extent* to which that may be true is a matter for God, the Judge of all, to determine. That He has done. And revealing for the joy of our hearts what can result consequently on the obedience of the second Man, He has effectually answered the infidel objection, Why should any suffer for the sin of Adam in which they had no personal part? It is precisely on that principle that we can benefit by the obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have said that the extent to which the race may be beneficially affected is a matter for God to determine, and it is now a subject of divine revelation. Here analogy would completely fail us. So the apostle proceeds: "But not as the offence, so also is the free gift.* For if through the offence of one many be dead (rather, the many died), much more (not, the many shall *live*, which would be the correlative to *died*, but) the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one Man, Jesus Christ, has abounded unto the many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift; for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one, much more (not, life shall, but) they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." How Paul delights himself in the grace of God. The parallel is obvious, whether we think of the two men (15), their act (16), or the result (17). But how far does grace exceed in its richness. The many died on the one hand, the grace of God has *abounded* unto the many on the other. *One* offence called for judgment unto condemnation, *many* offences drew forth divine grace, the free gift unto justi-

* Some would punctuate the first sentence in both vv. 15, 16 interrogatively, "shall not, etc.?"

fication. And if, as was true, death reigned by the one man, those who share in the favours mentioned, *viz.*, abundance of grace and of the free bestowal of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. How true it is

"The riches of God's grace
Our highest thoughts exceed."

To nothing short of the kingdom are we pointed, who are heirs of it through grace.

How far can this Principle extend?—As regards the principle it is only limited in application by the bounds of the human race. "Therefore," we next read (and leaving out the words in *italics* in the Authorised Version the sense will be better understood) "as by the offence of one (or rather, as by one offence) upon (or, unto) all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one (or rather, by one act of righteousness) upon (or, unto) all men unto justification of life." But all in fact are unwilling to share in this grace. Hence the language changes from *all* to the *many*. "For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous." Thus far as to the parallel between Adam and Christ. Who indeed could have guessed when sin and death came in, that on the same principle grace, life, and righteousness could ever be shared in by any of those liable to the consequences of the fall? Who, we may ask in the language of the inspired Word, was God's counsellor in all this? Who but Himself then knew His purpose, settled before the foundation of the world, and only to be revealed centuries after the fall?

Condemnation a Future State.—Ere leaving this part of the subject it may be well to call attention to some terms here first met with. The judgment was of one unto condemnation, the free gift of many offences unto justification (16). Here judgment is distinguished from condemnation. By the former is to be understood the subject of the judicial sentence (ii. 2, 3; iii. 8), the charge which had been brought against the accused. By the latter, which is here used for the first time, the state is defined to which all men were made liable by Adam—"unto condemnation." This is evidently both future

and final in its character. No man that we know of has yet entered into it. No one who falls under it will ever come out of it. God never, that we read of, reverses the sentence of condemnation. He condemned Sodom and Gomorrha with an overthrow (2 Pet. ii. 6), and they suffer the vengeance of everlasting fire (Jude 7).* God too has by the incarnation and the death of His Son condemned sin in the flesh (Rom. viii. 3). He will condemn the world by-and-by (1 Cor. xi. 32). And the unbeliever will be condemned (Mark xvi. 16), who already is judged (John iii. 18), as this last evangelist really wrote. The prince of this world too is judged (John xvi. 11) but he is not yet said to be condemned. Men then never were in condemnation, though from Adam's transgression they were on the way to it. For those in Christ there is no condemnation. So the apostle, be it remarked, does not say *no more*, but no condemnation. In that condition they never were. Into it they never will enter. It is a future state for the impenitent, not a past nor a present one.†

Condemnation and Justification.—Again, *condemnation* in our passage is opposed to *justification* in v. 16 and to *justification of life* in v. 18. Understanding that *condemnation* has reference to a state or condition, final in its character, we can readily see that *justification* in v. 16, as well as *justification of life* in v. 18, contrasted with it as they both are, must refer to a *state* or *condition*, and that as final as condemnation. For what flows from the obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ cannot surely be less enduring than the fruit of Adam's disobedience. Hence "justification" in v. 16 speaks of a condition, final in its character, procured for the one who is ranged under the headship of Him that was to come. And this is signified by the word in the original selected by the Spirit of God, which is translated *justification*, implying, it would seem, to quote the words of another, "the state of accomplished

* In the day when waters shall flow into the dead sea, and heal it, the miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be healed. (Ezek. xlvii. 11.)

† These remarks may surprise some, and the Gospel of John may be thought to contradict them. Any one, however, consulting the original, or even a good modern translation, will find that the verb *to condemn* only occurs in chapter viii. 10, 11. Elsewhere throughout his Gospel John writes of *judging* and of *judgment*.

subsisting righteousness before God, in which justification places us." * Then *justification* (or justifying) *of life* reminds us that, as death was a consequence of Adam's fall, and as the second death, in which all the condemned will have part (Rev. xx. 11-15), was the only portion for all his race, had not the Lord Jesus Christ died for sinners, we, who believe on Him, have through His one act of obedience a righteous title to life, of which none can deprive us. And that life is rightfully ours, and will be for ever. For though condemnation, as we have said, is for man a future state, we know of justification, and justification (or, justifying) of life as ours now, and for evermore. Of *life* then the apostle here speaks, as he had of *persons* in iv. 25. The Lord's resurrection was needful for our justifying. From His act of obedience unto death flows to us the justifying of life.

Why the Law entered.—From Adam we have been carried on to the Lord Jesus Christ, thus coming down through forty centuries of this world's history, ere the second Man appeared and died. Now between the creation of Adam and the birth of the Lord the law came in, having been given to Israel at Sinai nearly fifteen centuries before the Christian era, reckoning according to the common computation. Did then the introduction of the law set aside the principle just affirmed, that the race is involved in the consequences of the act of the head? By no means. "The law entered," we are told, "that the offence might abound" (v. 20). "It was added because of transgressions" (Gal. iii. 19). God's purpose in giving it is definitely stated; and the purpose was accomplished. "By the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. iii. 20), the apostle has already told us. "I had not known sin, but by the law" (vii. 7), is his recorded experience; for it brought out what man's evil nature really is, what is the mind of the flesh in him, which is "not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (viii. 7). Hence the effect was that the offence

* See a useful note on the term in Rom. v. 16 in a *New Translation of the New Testament, by Mr. J. N. Darby.* See also *Meyer's* Commentary, who explains it as "the *sentence defining righteousness*, the ordinance of God in which He completes the justifying, the opposite of condemnation."

abounded, the very prohibition stirring up the deep-seated hostility of the flesh to God. But where sin abounded grace did much more abound, that " as sin hath reigned unto (rather, in) death, even so might grace reign, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord " (v. 21). Grace did indeed much more abound. Sin reigned in (or, in the power of) death, referring to the statement of v. 12. On the other hand grace, not righteousness, reigns. Had the latter been the case judgment must have overtaken every one of Adam's race, and condemnation have been their portion for ever. Thank God it is very different. Grace reigns, not at the expense of righteousness, but through it, and unto everlasting life by Jesus Christ our Lord. Through Him this blessed result takes place for all under His headship.

But the teaching in connection with this truth of headship of race is to be still further opened up, and that in connection with the death of Him who is the Head. Justification of life we share in, and " shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." Now what provision is there, if any, for walk on earth as becomes those who are in Christ—a term as yet not met with in the epistle, though consequences flowing from it have already begun to be unfolded ? In the rest of this great section of the Gospel (vi. 1-viii. 11) we find God's answer to such a question, in the setting forth that which results from saints having died with Christ to sin (vi.), and to the law (vii.).

VII.

Christians have Died to Sin. Chapter VI.

THE introduction of the law, the effect of which was to make the offence abound, leads on naturally to a further development of the Gospel, *viz.*, how deliverance from law and from sin are effected, for clearly deliverance from both is required, if the introduction of the former only increased, and that in conformity with God's purpose in giving it, man's offence. For the law entered that the offence, or trespass, not sin, might abound. It was given, not to make men sinners, that they were as children of Adam; nor yet to make them sin, for no man when tempted, is tempted of God (James i. 13). It was given, as it is now revealed to us, to discover to man how evil he was, in that prohibitions on the part of God only made transgressions to abound. Hopeless then it was that man by keeping the law could please God, and so earn a title to His favour, since by it the evil within him only appeared more incorrigible than ever. Deliverance from law, and from the power of sin, became therefore absolutely necessary. And this we now learn is a constituent part of the Gospel of God. But in treating of the subject in order the apostle deals first with the question of sin, and then with that of the law.

Christian Teaching.—Addressing himself to the first of these, he meets Antinomian teaching sought to be based on the freeness of divine grace. Two questions are asked (vi. 1, 15), the answers to which on the part of the Spirit of God not only leave an objector without excuse, but drive him, as it were, out of the field altogether. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Such is the teaching of the divine Word. Thereupon the first of the two questions is asked. "What shall we say then? Shall we *continue* in sin, that grace may abound?" Antinomian teaching would suggest that. Christian teaching refuses it, and refutes it. One simple question exposes the absurdity of such a proposition.

"How shall we," asks the apostle, "that are dead (or, who died) to sin, live any longer therein" (vi. 2). How live in that to which you have died? Christians (for of them only is the apostle here writing) have died to sin. How, and when? Christ has died to sin (vi. 10). We are in Him who has died to it, and who has no more to do with it. Perfectly holy all His life, we need not say, He died to sin when He died on the cross. He appeared then to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. He will appear for them that expect Him the second time without sin unto salvation (Heb. ix. 26, 28). Apart from any question of sin will He appear, having nothing more to do with it, save the carrying out by divine power the putting of it away, full provision for which has been made by His sacrifice. He has died to sin—to every question of it. We, as in Him, have died to it, since the effect of the act of the Head reaches to every member of the race.

"Shall we continue in sin?" is it then asked? Far be the thought. "How shall we who died to sin live any longer therein?" (vi. 2). The one question, as we have said, is answered by the other. How should one continue in that to which one has died? This is Christian teaching, and what it affirms is true of every one who is in Christ, whether such an one may know it or not. Christ's condition—the having died to sin—is ours also, because we are in Him. Hence this doctrine of headship of race becomes most practical, and most useful. For, if the race is to rejoice in justification of life derived from the act of the obedience of the Head, practice it is here seen is intimately connected with this doctrine—practice, not to get into a condition, but practice in conformity with that condition which is absolutely true of every member of the race.

Christian Profession.—But not only is it Christian teaching that we have died to sin, our Christian profession acknowledges it likewise. So the apostle proceeds: "Or know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into* Christ Jesus were baptized into His death. Therefore

* In all three places in vv. 3, 4, *unto* would be better than *into*, expressing that to which we are baptized. So in 1 Cor. x 2 Israel were baptized unto Moses, thus taking their place as his disciples. We are baptized *unto* Christ, *unto* death. In v. 3 we should read

we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (3, 4). Here Christian baptism with water is introduced, and the teaching about it set forth. We may learn then of what such baptism speaks, and how to apply the teaching of it. For whether it be Peter (1 Pet. iii. 21), or Paul who refers to it (Rom. vi. 3, 4; Col. ii. 12), it is in each case introduced in connection with Christian position in this world, and as bearing on Christian walk, and is an expression, as St. Paul teaches us, of burial unto death. Not of life, nor of death does baptism speak. Burial, and that unto death, and burial with Christ is the real meaning of the rite to which St. Paul submitted, but of which St. Peter had no need† To what had the converts in Rome submitted? Was it not to Christian baptism? Of what did that speak? Of burial with Christ unto death. By that rite, then, they were put professedly into the company of Christ, who has actually died, through being thereby buried with Him. They had *died* with Christ through being in Him. They were *buried* with Him by baptism unto death. How then go on in sin to which not only He had died, but to which they, as in Him, had died, and had professed to have been buried with Him unto death? Christian condition, and Christian profession alike forbid such a course.

Christians not here viewed as Risen.—Now Christ has not only died, He has also been raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. The Father's glory was concerned in not leaving in death His Son, who had so fully glorified Him on the cross. Of His death and resurrection for us we have already been taught. Now we are to learn how His death and His resurrection are to speak to us concerning our walk upon earth. But how can this be? First we are reminded to this end of what lies before us in the

" Christ Jesus," not " Jesus Christ," for it is unto Him who is risen, and ascended, and not as on this side of death, that we are baptized.

† Paul writes of this rite as that in which he had part. "*We* are buried," etc. (Rom. vi. 4). Peter, on the contrary, states, which saves *you*, as we should read (1 Pet. iii. 21). not *us*.

future. "If we have been planted together (rather, identified with Him) in the likeness of His death, we shall be also of His resurrection" (5). Resurrection for us is viewed in the Romans as future—"We *shall be* of His resurrection." In Colossians, where deliverance from the world is the matter in hand, not only our having died with Christ, but our being risen with Him is the line of teaching required (Col. ii. 20, iii. 1). In Ephesians, those formerly Jews, and those formerly Gentiles, once dead *in* (not, *to*) sins, are declared to be raised together (Eph. ii. 6). But in Romans the subject in hand —deliverance from the power of sin—does not call for that teaching. He having died to sin, because we have died with Christ, it is the way of deliverance now, as by-and-by through temporal death, or the change (1 Cor. xv. 51) we shall be freed from the presence of sin. But now the knowledge of our future is to be helpful to us in the present. God has provided for that future, and His present dealing with our old man, which has been crucified with Christ, is part of that provision. In us the old man remains. Put away from us it will not be, whilst we are upon earth; but bondage to it should be for every Christian a thing of the past, seeing it "is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed (or, annulled), that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom. vi. 6).

What Crucified Means.—Of our old man we read, it has been *crucified* with Christ. Of us, in this portion of the epistle, it is stated, that we have *died* with Christ. For crucifixion and death are not necessarily synonymous terms. Crucifixion speaks of judicial dealing, and assumes that some one is competent so to act. Shall I crucify your king? asked Pilate (John xix. 15). Crucify Him, crucify Him, was the cry of the multitude (Mark xv. 13, 14). So, Pilate, when he had scourged Him, delivered Him to be crucified (Matt. xxvii. 26). A person might die in many ways, but crucifying was penal dealing: malefactors were crucified. God then, we learn, has judicially dealt with our old man in the cross of Christ. Thus has He already worked for us to be by-and-by of Christ's resurrection, *i.e.* to be wholly free from sin. All this is a subject of divine revelation, that, whilst awaiting deliverance for ever from its

presence, we may have even now deliverance from its thraldom. "For," adds the apostle, illustrating his teaching by a reference to natural things, "he that is dead is justified (not, freed) from sin" (7).

Our Old Man.—Two terms just used demand a little attention. What is our old man? and what does being justified from sin here mean? Our old man, as the phrase imports, is something belonging to us which can yet be viewed as apart from us. *Our* old man is crucified with Christ, that henceforth *we*, not *it*, should not serve sin. It is not a person, though at times it may be identified with the person; but can be, as here, viewed apart from the person. It is that evil principle, or nature which is in every one of us as children of Adam. God has dealt with it judicially in the cross of Christ, thus showing what He thinks of it, and in what light we are to regard it. Formerly its ways characterised each one of us. What it is was manifested by the walk and acts of each one when unconverted; and so, whilst having its seat in us, it characterised each one, as a garment might one's person. Hence we read (Eph. iv. 22; Col. iii. 9) of Christians having put off the old man with his deeds, and having put on the new man. It being crucified with Christ, we are no longer to serve sin. It is not then the person, for one cannot put off one's person. Yet it exists. It is not a mere character, for such has not deeds. It is something within us, the deeds of which can characterise us, and present us to others in a certain appearance, as a garment may a person. It has now been judicially dealt with by God, crucified with Christ, to free Christians from the bondage of sin. What is it then? what can it be? but that evil nature which the law cannot curb, and which nothing but death can deal with practically.

Justified from Sin.—We have said that the statement, "he that is dead is justified from sin," is an illustration drawn from natural things. The reader may be convinced of the correctness of this, if he marks the form of the apostle's language here. Hitherto in the course of his argument he has spoken, it should be remarked, of *we* and *our*. In verse 8, it will be seen, he reverts to the pronoun *we*. But in verse 7 the apostle speaks of *he*. That shows us that he is making a general

statement applicable to the purpose in hand. When this is seen, the difficulty some have found in the teaching of this verse is at once removed. As a dead man's condition is a complete answer to any charge made against him of sin subsequent to his death, so let Christians who have died to sin live and walk as freed from its bondage. Nor need the term "justified" occasion here any difficulty, for the justification referred to flows from the person's state—dead; so it is evident that it must not be confounded with the doctrine of justification of the ungodly, which occupies such a prominent place in the Gospel of God. The man's state as dead bars all charge of sin subsequent to his death, though, of course, it is no answer to the question of his conduct before death. The justification here spoken of, then, is true of every one who has died. The justification of Rom. iii. is true only of believers. Well, we who are in Christ have died to sin. Let freedom from its bondage be in consequence as true of us practically as it is really of a dead man.

To Live to God.—Now we can advance a step further. Since God has provided that we should no longer serve sin, another question comes up. Are we to be as monks, or as those who, Buddhist like, would seek for the annihilation of the evil within us? Is repression of evil all that is to be desired? Assuredly not. Activity of life should characterise each Christian. By-and-by, it is plain, we shall rejoice in the unrestrained activity of our body, and be wholly employed in the service of God (Rom. viii. 11; Rev. iv. 9-11). For that, however, we await the quickening of the body. Are we till then to be passive? That is not Christianity. With capabilities for acting we have each one of us been endowed. Energies, too, we possess. These were formerly enlisted in the service of sin, and the world, *i.e.*, that system of things which is not of the Father. All energy in those directions should cease for the Christian. But is our capability for activity in the present to remain impotent? Is all energy to lie dormant? By no means. So, as we have been already reminded of our future in connection with the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. vi. 4, 5), in the spirit of which we should now walk, we are here

again reminded of our future—the living with Christ—that it may speak to us whilst here below. "Now, if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him. Knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God" (8-10). Hence comes the conclusion expressed in the form of an exhortation, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in (not, through) Christ Jesus." Christ lives to God. He is our life. To whom are we living?

In Christ.—"In Christ Jesus," so wrote the apostle by his amanuensis, mentioning for the first time in the Romans the doctrine of *in Christ*, a condition true of all Christians, but a truth connected with the teaching about race and headship of race. So it is not till that line of instruction is commenced to be unfolded that the apostle in the Romans brings it before his readers. The sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus Christ *for* us, and the standing before God, which is true of believers in consequence, can be set forth at length without introducing any notice of this truth. Not, indeed, that one can be justified by faith, and yet not be in Christ also. That would be impossible. But when giving an orderly exposition of truths, under the guidance and teaching of the Holy Ghost, things are brought in just in their right place. So it is when Christian experience and practice are to be treated of, distinct from Christian standing, that the teaching of *being in Christ* is brought forward. For since the condition of the Head of the race as regards sin is true of every member of the race, as the Lord has died to sin, so have Christians as in Him. So this truth of being in Christ has now a prominent place. And provision, we thus learn, has been made not only for our freedom from sin's thraldom, but also for our living to God. Hence follows the exhortation, "Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the* lusts thereof. Neither yield† ye (or, present)

* The words "it in" should be omitted.

† The reader who can consult the original should notice the use of tenses in the Greek impossible to mark in English. "Neither

your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield (or, present) yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law but under grace" (vv. 12-14). Under grace, not under law do we get deliverance from continuance in sin. A simple statement written in God's book centuries back, yet how slowly learnt by the soul when conscious in some measure of its sinfulness! The efforts, the strivings, the ascetic practices, the mortification at repeated failures, how much of all that would have been spared, had these simple words of the Gospel of God found at once their place in the heart—"Sin shall *not* have dominion over you, for ye are not under law, but under grace." What results can flow from the death of Christ, when the teaching about it is rightly apprehended and obeyed!

May we Sin?—But would men take advantage of the doctrines of grace, and make them an excuse for liberty to sin, looking only at exemption from the penal consequences to which otherwise they would be liable? If immunity from these is secured, why be careful about the walk? This point is now met, the second of the two questions (p. 60) being now put. "What then? shall (or should) we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace?" "God forbid"* is the prompt reply. And here it is seen how St. Paul and St. John are at one in their teaching. St. John writes to Christians that they sin not (1 John ii. 1). St. Paul exposes the folly of supposing that there can be any licence for sin. In St. John's epistle the word comes in the form of a command. St. Paul, guided by the Holy Ghost, exposes the incongruity of yielding

yield:" here the verb is in the present, expressive of the continuance of the action, *i.e.*, at no time do it. "But yield:" here it is the aorist, to express that it should be done once for all, and never to be revoked, or to need repetition.

* Literally, "Let it not be." "The familiar form of negation," writes Meyer, "by which the thing asked is repelled with abhorrence, is used by Paul particularly often in our epistle (iii. 4, 6, 31; vi. 2, 15; vii, 7, 13; ix. 14; xi. 1, 11), elsewhere in 1 Cor. vi. 15; Gal. ii. 17; iii. 21. . . . In the other writings of the New Testament it occurs only at Luke xx. 16, but is current in later Greek authors."

at all to it. We have seen how the question of continuance in sin is met by the question, To what have we died? We are now to remark, that the question of sinning at all is met by another, *viz.*, Whose bondservants is it that Christians really are? Thus objectors are effectually silenced, not merely because to sin is forbidden, but also because it is inconsistent with Christian profession. How obey a master from whose slavery you have been emancipated? A host of casuistical questions are settled in this simple way. "Know ye not that to whom ye yield (or, present) yourselves bondservants* to obey, his bondservants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness" (16). All can understand this. But whose bondservants are Christians? The apostle shall tell us. "God be thanked, that ye were the bondservants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you."† Being, then, made free from sin, ye became the bondservants of righteousness" (17, 18).

How do we become Bondservants?—A change of master, then, has taken place. Now in this life slaves are bought and sold without being allowed a voice in the matter. Not thus is it with the bondservice here spoken of, whether of sin, or of righteousness. So we read, "As ye have yielded your members bondservants to uncleanness, and to iniquity, unto iniquity; even so now yield your members bondservants to righteousness, unto holiness" (19). Sinners by birth through Adam's disobedience (v. 19), men become bondservants to sin by yielding to it. Thus man's responsibility is declared and maintained. He is not responsible for being a sinner, or for having an evil nature. He is responsible for yielding to its dictates. In consequence of Adam's transgression he became a sinner. Through yielding to sin he becomes its bondservant. He was born a sinner, was by nature a child of wrath. He was *not* born the bondslave of sin. He became that by the exercise of his will—yielding himself to it. Hence he is held responsible for his acts, and so his responsibility is here pressed on him.

* "Bondservants" is more *literal* and *expressive* than "servants." hence we have so quoted the passage.

† Or, as the margin rightly gives it; "whereto ye were delivered."

He yielded himself to sin. Let the Christian yield himself to righteousness, unto holiness. He formerly did the one; he is now to do the other. And so, just as the doctrine of headship of race has a bright and blessed side, as we have seen in chap. v., so the doctrine of personal responsibility for one's actions can be used for the furtherance of practical holiness and righteousness. "As ye have yielded your members, etc., so now yield your members bondservants to righteousness, unto holiness," or, sanctification. The responsibility of the person, and his ability through grace to yield himself to righteousness, is plainly asserted; and the figurative language employed expresses the completeness of the surrender, as well as the complete change. No one can be the slave, or bondservant of two opposing masters at the same time. Once the bondservant of sin, the surrender to serve righteousness should be definitely and finally made. This again, though expressed in the original by the aorist tense, cannot be so well marked in a translation.

Sanctification.—"Unto holiness," or, sanctification. This is to be the end in view of all the servants of righteousness. Here in this epistle *sanctification* is first mentioned, and, with the exception of 1 Peter i. 2, the term is confined in the New Testament to the writings of St. Paul, though the inculcation of practical holiness is met with elsewhere. Now, since those in Rome addressed in our epistle were already saints by calling (Rom. i. 7), having been sanctified in Christ Jesus (1 Cor. i. 2) through sanctification of the Spirit (2 Thess. ii. 13; 1 Pet. i. 2), and that, as we elsewhere learn, by the will of God, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all (Heb. x. 10), teaching on this point was quite in season, for it concerns those who are saints, having been already sanctified. For sanctification may be spoken of as effected already (1 Cor. vi. 11), though in the other aspect of the subject, as here, it as practical, and therefore may be called progressive. So it is to be followed (Heb. xii. 14): and it was the apostle's prayer, that God would sanctify the Thessalonian saints wholly (1 Thess. v. 23). Now this will be attained, as our epistle teaches, by yielding our members bondservants to righteousness unto holiness. The place, then, this subject has in the Romans should be

noticed. It is not introduced as a means to an end, but as an object of pursuit, ever to be kept in view whilst we are upon earth. "*Unto* sanctification." We are sanctified once for all by an act of the divine will. But we are sanctified, or set apart, for a holy use. Now this practical sanctification will only result as we yield our members bondservants to righteousness. And those only can now do that who are in Christ, and by consequence have received the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Fruit.—The apostle has spoken of a change of masters. He will now contrast the result of serving the one with that of serving the other. When the saints in Rome were the servants of sin they were free from righteousness. Holiness under such circumstances could not be produced. "What fruit had ye then," he asked, "in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now, being made free from sin and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in (not, through) Christ Jesus our Lord" (21-23). Thus Antinomian tendency is checked, any pleadings for such practices are effectually silenced, and its advocates are seen to have no ground to stand upon. It is irrational, and thoroughly anti-Christian. Continuance in sin is a denial of Christian condition, and subversive of Christian profession. Allowance to sin at all is inconsistent with the change of mastership, of which all saints in Christ profess to be subjects. And fruit can only be produced as each one acts in accordance with this, yielding himself a bondservant to righteousness, unto holiness, and a bondservant to God, having his fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life (19, 21).

The End.—The end, then, must not be forgotten. Clearly is it here put before all. The end of the things of which they were ashamed is death. The end of fruitfulness for God is everlasting life. As a king gives pay to his soldiers, so sin, like a ruler, gives what is due to those who serve it (16)—the wages (a military term, as it is in the original, used of the pay of an army) deserved by those whose members have been yielded as instruments, or weapons (another military term) of un-

righteousness (13). On the other hand God gives, not what is due, for that would be everlasting punishment, but everlasting life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Death and everlasting life, these are the ends spoken of. Death here, it should be remarked, is temporal death. Were we to view it as the second death, the lake of fire, as has been but too often done, we should necessarily limit the gift of God to everlasting life, which would be a mistake. God gives other blessings besides that. Results are stated but not all results on either side. On the one hand it is death. That does not, however, exhaust *all* the wages of sin, seeing that after death for the impenitent there is the judgment of the great white throne (Heb. ix. 27; Rev. xx. 12). On the other hand it is everlasting life, connected with which are other blessings whose enumeration did not lie within the scope of the apostle's argument. We now pass on to a consideration of the law, and to the doctrine of freedom from it, in order to bring forth fruit unto God, having learnt above that Christians are not under law, but under grace (vi. 14).

VIII

Freedom from the Law. Chapter VII.

The Law.—In entering upon this subject a few remarks about the law may here not be out of place. Its introduction was subsequent to patriarchal times, four hundred and thirty years having elapsed between the promise to Abraham of the land for an inheritance (Gen. xii. 7) and the giving of the law to Israel by Moses at Mount Sinai (Exod. xx.). The purpose in giving it was that the offence might abound (Rom. v. 20), being added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise had been made (Gal. iii. 19).

Its right effect on the individual was, as it is expressed, "that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful" (Rom. vii. 13). It could curse (Gal. iii. 10). It could kill (Rom. vii. 9, 11). It could not give life. So righteousness could not come by it (Gal. iii. 21). Nor could it condemn sin in the flesh (Rom. viii. 3). Yet it is even now good, we learn, if a man use it lawfully, being made not for the righteous, but for the lawless and the unruly (1 Tim. i. 9). Furthermore, to those put under it by God it was a schoolmaster up to Christ (Gal. iii. 24), and they were like children in their nonage, under tutors and governors till the time appointed of the father (Gal. iv. 2). And from its curse none, who had been put under it by God, could have got free, had not the Lord Jesus Christ become a curse for them (Gal. iii. 13), its ministry being one of death, and of condemnation (2 Cor. iii. 7, 9). Such was the law, freedom from which was requisite for the person to be fruitful unto God.

In the pursuit of this important matter two points are now established by the apostle: 1st. How a person can get free from it (1-6); 2nd. The impossibility of one under law answering to the requirements of Christian teaching (7-25).

Freedom from it by Death.—The Christian, we have learnt, is one who is in Christ, and has therefore died to that to which the Lord Jesus Christ has died. Made, or born of a woman, born under law, the Lord, as

one of Israel, submitted to all its requirements. But He died. He passed away in person from this scene, and is no longer under law. So the apostle writes: "Or, know ye not, brethren (for I speak to them that know the law) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?" (vii. 1). If death overtakes a person, the law's dominion over him necessarily terminates, seeing he is no longer living in the sphere in which it has sway. We can all understand this. But when applying this principle to Christians in life a change of illustration is required, for such have manifestly never left earth, being still actually as men and women in the region where they were. Hence, after enunciating the fact that the law's dominion over a person is terminated by death, the fitting illustration for the conveyance of Gospel teaching on this subject is supplied by that of a woman, whose first husband has died. In that case, death, which has come in, has broken for ever the link which formerly existed; and the woman, thereby delivered from the law of her husband, is free to be married to another. These facts from common life brought before us, the true teaching of freedom from the law can be entered upon. The law's power over any one, we repeat it, is terminated by death, and the woman free from the law of the first husband can marry again without being called an adulteress.

Naturally these two states, the having died and re-marrying, cannot co-exist. But the Christian can be *spiritually* an illustration of them both, and should remember it. So we read "Ye, also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God" (4). We have died to sin. We have died also to the law.

Not a Matter of Experience.—Now this condition in relation to the law is not, it must be remembered, a matter of experience. It is true of the one who is in Christ, because he is in Christ, and whether he knows it or not. Experience, however, should be founded on the acknowledgment of it. "Ye are not under law" is true of all Christians, whether they own it or not. And it is very important for the saint to grasp this, and to act on it. We all know the natural tendency of the heart when a

man is woke up to see that he has failed before God. The thought at once is, what shall I do to please God? Efforts, strivings, and virtually putting himself under law to merit the divine favour are but too commonly the practices resorted to, and with what effect all who have tried them can declare. How different is the teaching of Christianity! "Ye have become (or, were made) dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another," etc., and what for? "that we," writes the apostle, here classing himself with his readers, "should bring forth fruit unto God." The folly, then, of seeking to keep the law, to be fruitful to God, which, by the way, was never enjoined on the Gentiles for that purpose, is demonstrated at once for the child of God. How seek to keep that to which you have died? Who have become dead to the law? All men? No, only Christians.

How Effected?—Now this result is effected by the body of Christ, *i.e.* by His death, those of whom it is true being in Him who has actually died to it. Thus they have become dead to it. Here, again, it may be remarked how Antinomianism is checked. For if the Christian has become dead to the law, may he cast off all restraint, and live as he likes? That cannot be, seeing he is married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead. In chapter vi. we were taught that Christians had changed master. Here, using the language of the illustration, we learn they have changed husbands. In each case they are viewed as belonging to a subject class, and that in order to be fruitful unto God. For since the coming of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, none, whether Jews or Gentiles, can otherwise really live to God.

Old Testament Saints.—We have said since Pentecost, for before the coming of Christ people under law could be righteous before God, "walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless" (Luke i. 6.) Such could plead their integrity, and could ask to be judged by God in accordance with it (Ps. xxvi. 1), and could look to Him to hearken to their supplication because of their walk before God "in truth, and with a perfect heart" (Isa. xxxviii. 3). Since the Lord's death, and the full unfolding of Christian truth, no real soul could take that ground. Fruitfulness for God cannot

now be produced by law keeping, ever remembering at the same time that it will not be furthered by law breaking (1 Tim. i. 8-11.) So even on the mount, surrounded by disciples and in the audience of a great multitude, composed of convergent crowds from many parts (Matt. iv. 25-v. 1), the Lord began to set forth, that more would be needed to enter the kingdom of heaven than what had been commonly taught. Christian teaching, consequent on the coming of the Holy Ghost (John xiv. 26), is fuller and more heart-searching, as it tells us of the incorrigibility of the old man, and sets before us no lower standard for our walk than that of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself (1 Cor. xi. 1; Eph. v. 2; 1 Pet. ii. 21; 1 John ii. 6), seeing that we are partakers of the divine nature, and are indwelt by the Spirit of Christ.

Power Requisite.—For this power is needed. Right desires, of course, there must be; a new nature supplies them. But power to conform to those desires is requisite. For this the gift of the Holy Ghost is wanted, and the authority for such a statement is furnished by this chapter of the Romans (vii. 5-25). So we read "when we were in the flesh," (referring, manifestly, to a former condition out of which Christians had been brought), "the motions (or, passions) of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, having died to that* wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter" (5, 6). These few words mark an important difference between Christians and all others, and show the positive need for the provision God has made by the death of Christ, and the coming of the Holy Ghost for the former to bear fruit unto Him. Christians are not in the flesh. Christians have died to the law. Both these depend on being in Christ. How we come to be no longer in the flesh is one thing. What was the practical consequence of being in it is another, connected as that was for Israel with their being under law. This last is first demonstrated. Let us look into it.

Two Questions.—We have as in Christ died to the

* This is confessedly the right reading, and is in harmony with that which has preceded. The law is not dead, but we have died to it.

law, the purpose of this being, as stated above, to be fruitful to God, and the absolute necessity for it being seen in the fact that the law was powerless to help us in our need. Hence two questions here naturally arise. 1st. Is the law sin? 2nd. Was that which is good made death unto saints?

Turning to the *first*. Is the law sin, since Christians have died to it? By no means. The apostle had not known sin, but by the law. It forbad him to lust. But the prohibition only stirred up the opposition of the evil nature within him. The effect was, sin revived, and he died, and the commandment, which was ordained to life (Deut. xxx. 15, 16), he found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion through the commandment, deceived him, and by it slew him. Wherefore it is plain that the law is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good (7-12). "By the law is the knowledge of sin" (iii. 20). It imputed the sin of lust to him, *i.e.*, put it to his account.

That question promptly settled, leads on to the *second*. Since sin through the commandment slew him, Was, then, that which is good made death unto him? Again the answer is in the negative. God's object was that "sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me," says the apostle, "by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful" (13.) Covetousness was roused into activity by the prohibition embodied in the commandment on the part of God at Mount Sinai. Hence the evil of man's nature was demonstrated, and the impossibility of the law dealing with it, so as to curb it, became indeed apparent. Having reached this point, certain deductions can be drawn resulting from the experience of one quickened, but who is still in the flesh, indicating the effect on the conscience of being in that condition, and demonstrating what is needed, *viz.*, deliverance from "the body of death" (24).

In the Flesh.—As to the law it is spiritual, pointing out what is God's mind for His creature, so no blame can be attached to it because of the quickened one's failure. It does its work in convicting him of sin. As for the failing one, he is of flesh, made of flesh, *i.e.*, fleshy, or in this

sense fleshly,* not carnal in an evil sense, seeing that his will is not viewed here as engaged in serving sin. As of flesh he is without strength, sold under sin (14). He has right desires, is grieved that he does not carry them out, so is clearly born of God. He has a new nature, but lacks power to act in accordance with its dictates, he being still in the flesh, and so not in the Spirit. But having a new nature to which belong those right desires, whilst lacking spiritual power to carry them out, he learns, and confesses it, that in him, that is, in his flesh dwells no good thing. Powerless to do good, though longing to act aright, and doing all the time that which he hates, he discovers the existence in his flesh of an evil principle, a nature which he can now view as something distinct from himself.

Hence we see, and it is important that we should, that being in the flesh, and having the flesh in us, are two very different things. The flesh within us stirs up opposition to God's will, and the saint is carried away by it, because he is in that weak condition, his birth as a child of Adam, designated the being in the flesh. Viewed in the abstract this last is not a sinful condition, for whilst in it the man has right desires. It is a condition of weakness, and so the evil within him, the flesh, gets the mastery. The truth of what has been remarked now appears. "If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law, that it is good" (16). Of the dictates of the new man he is conscious, but painfully conscious of failure in

* This is the better reading here, and is confirmed by the context. Elsewhere the same word *sarkinos* is met with (2 Cor. iii. 3; Heb. vii. 16), and should probably be read also in 1 Cor. iii. 1. "Paroxytone Adjectives (*i.e.*, those marked with an acute accent on the penultima). in *inos*," writes Winer in his *Greek Grammar*, sect. xvi., "almost without exception denote the material of which a thing is made." The use of this word *sarkinos* in the Greek Septuagint confirms this. See 2 Chron. xxxii, 8; Ezak. xi. 19; xxxvi. 26. And it is plain from Ezek.xi.; xxxvi. that it does not in the Septuagint imply what is evil, but, can, as 2 Chron. xxxii. 8 shows, be used to characterise what is weak." "With him is an arm of flesh." Compare Ps. lvi. 4: "What can flesh do unto me?" I would add that the terms "being in the flesh" and "fleshly" (Rom. vii. 5, 14) bear the same relation to each other, as "being in the Spirit" does to "spiritual" (Rom. viii. 9; 1 Cor. ii. 15). The one in the flesh is fleshy, or fleshly; the one in the Spirit is spiritual.

responding to them. This, however, teaches him what it is needful to know. "Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me" (17, 20). The existence of sin dwelling in him as something apart from himself is made apparent. What can he do? He finds a law, that, when he would do good, evil is present with him. "I delight in the law of God after the inward man," such an one can say. "But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."

What does he want? Clearly deliverance, as one taken captive requires. A captive is such, because he has no power to resist his captor; and it may be, as in this case, he is enslaved against his will. Deliverance, then, is needed. Whence shall it come? "O wretched man!" such an one may well exclaim, "who shall deliver me from (or rather, out of) the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (24, 25). Deliverance comes through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, as already stated in vv. 4, 6. God's purpose in giving the law is fully justified; God's provision for the quickened soul to be fruitful for God is thankfully recognised. With the mind he serves the law of God, with the flesh the law of sin. He has got a new nature, and can distinguish between the effect of that and of the old.

We subjoin a brief outline of this passage (7-25) that it may be the more readily seized. Two questions are asked and answered: 1st. Is the law sin (7-12)? 2nd. Was that which is good made death unto me (13-15)? Two conclusions are arrived at. 1st. If he does what he would not, he consents unto the law that it is good (16). 2nd. Then it is no more him, but sin that dwelleth in him (17-20). Now follows what he *finds* (21), what he *delights* in (22), and what he *sees* (23). Then his language changes, being no longer *I*, but *me*. Who shall deliver *me* (24)? That settled, the effect of each nature, the new, and the old, is stated (25). Further on we learn why we should not walk after this last (viii. 12, 13).

IX.

The Second Part of the Gospel Summed up.

Chapter VIII. 1-11.

CHRISTIAN condition in relation to sin and the law has been treated of at some length. The results are now briefly summarised, and that in the order in which the subject has been elucidated. 1st. We have stated what it is that those in Christ will *never* know; 2nd. What such have freedom from *now*; and 3rd, What it is that God has *already* condemned. So the reader may the more readily grasp this part of the Gospel of God, bearing as it does so directly on the Christian's walk and life.

The Summary.—First, then, we are reminded in a few words of that which passed before us in chap. v. 12-19. "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (viii 1). Condemnation for men on the part of God we have already pointed out (p. 56) is always viewed as future. Now it is of all importance to be assured that we are no longer on the way to it. Uncertainty as to the end of the journey will not conduce to liberty of spirit whilst on the road. God, then, in His great goodness would assure us, that for those who are in Christ Jesus there is no condemnation. Such are in the One who is risen, ascended, and glorified. Condemnation manifestly cannot await Him. It does not therefore await them. Now this immunity does not depend on our walk, but on the being in Christ; and of such, and of such only, not of the human race at large, is this freedom from future condemnation here predicated. The reader may therefore the more readily accept what has now to be stated, *viz.*, that the last clause of the verse as given in the common Greek text, and in the Authorised Version, *viz.*, "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," is really an interpolation, which distorts the teaching of the Gospel. For, if the being in Christ is not dependent nor its continuance contingent on our walk, no more can the immunity from condemnation be contingent on the character of it either. That clause must therefore be struck out whatever might be the predisposition to

uphold it, being as much here out of place as it is in place, and in keeping with apostolic teaching lower down. So, at present parting company with it, we may draw these conclusions from its unauthorised presence, that man by nature does not understand the teaching of divine grace and that he finds it at variance with his preconceived ideas. Are we throwing the door open to Antinomianism in saying this? We have only to study chaps. vi.-viii. of Romans to see that grace gives no countenance to that.

Next we read as the result of the teaching of chap. vi., "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (viii. 2). Provision, then, has been made that we should not serve sin. Now this is called a law, not that there is any reference to the law given by Moses at Sinai, but because the Spirit of life acts in a uniform way. So we read elsewhere of the law of faith (iii. 27), as here also of "the law of sin." See, too, vii. 21. It is the law of the Spirit of life, for the Holy Ghost is the power of life. Here we meet with a notice of the Holy Ghost. Hitherto in this epistle, where the Gospel has been treated of, the blood of Christ, and the death of the Lord Jesus Christ have been kept prominently before the reader, whilst teaching about the Holy Ghost, with one exception (v. 5), has been kept in the background. That will be the case no longer. From this time it comes into prominence; for the new nature, though it provides its possessor with right desires, has in itself no power to enforce conformity to them. Power for walk as Christians is furnished us only by the Holy Ghost. To walk in freedom from sin, the energy of the Spirit is requisite. Now every conscious recipient of forgiveness of sins has received the Holy Ghost. Hence the apostle expresses for himself,* what every true Christian should also be able to say of himself, or herself: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

Lastly, we are reminded in vv. 3, 4 of the subject of chap. vii. "For what the law could not do, in that it

* The Vatican uncial with the Sinaitic, as also F. G. and the Peshito Syriac, read *thee* for *me*. This Tischendorf follows in his 8th ed., and Alford regards it as an alternative reading.

was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness (or, righteous requirement) of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Sin in the flesh, that evil principle, or nature within us, has been condemned; not by the law, for it could not do it, but by God, through the incarnation and death of Christ. Both were needed for its full condemnation. God sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh. He came to this earth as a man, was found in fashion as a man, being born of a woman, born under law. Thus He was in the likeness of sinful flesh, though as conceived of the Holy Ghost He was Himself perfectly holy, being without sin (Luke i. 35). He has walked too here for God, the only perfect example of an obedient man which the world has ever beheld. To no one in whom there was sin could God point His people as furnishing a perfect standard for their walk. Another man, the Second man, must come for that. God sent Him, His own Son. Thus by His incarnation sin in the flesh was manifestly condemned. He then died, died to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. It must be bad indeed if it needed to be put away, and at such a cost to the Lord Jesus Christ. Fully, then, and in the most emphatic manner has God condemned sin which is in each one of us. And He has done that, "in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Here the clause improperly inserted at the end of verse 1 has its place, for that which the law enjoined can only be responded to as we walk after the Spirit.

The doctrine of deliverance from the power of sin has been now unfolded, as well as deliverance from its guilt. Fruitfulness in life and in walk is therefore to be cultivated, as that which God desires, and for which He has made provision. The one in Christ is to go on his road with the certainty that condemnation, in which as a child of Adam he would in the future have been landed, will never be his lot. He is to walk, and to act as one freed by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. And discouragement is never

to take possession of him, to paralyse his actions through the consciousness of the presence of indwelling sin. That is surely there. But God has condemned it by the incarnation and death of His Son, that the Christian should be free to serve God, not as under law, though nevertheless fulfilling its righteous requirement when walking not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Flesh and Spirit.—These two are here contrasted. The fruits of a tree show of what kind it is. "Do men," asks the Lord, "gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit" (Mat. vii. 16-18). What is true in the vegetable world is true in the moral, the Christian be it remembered having in him two natures, which cannot be assimilated, nor does the one ever pass into the other. "Can a fig tree," asks James, "yield olives, or a vine figs?" (iii. 12). Yet what men know is impossible to nature, they too often think can be true of man. No greater mistake than this can be made, arising probably from ignorance of the ruin caused by the fall. On the point in question Scripture is clear—and of the unchangeableness, and of the incorrigibleness of the flesh the apostle will now teach us. "They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit" (Rom. viii. 5). A nature can only act in a given direction. Hence, the individual, as he is dominated by the one or the other, minds either the things of the flesh, or the things of the Spirit. Flesh and Spirit are quite distinct. They cannot be amalgamated. Opposed in character, the end connected with each is very different likewise. "The mind of the flesh (rather than, to be carnally minded) is death; but the mind of the Spirit (rather than, to be spiritually minded) is life and peace." And the reason is added, "Because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (6, 7). We have then in us, each and all, a nature which is wholly opposed to God, and is radically and irredeemably bad. Fruit from it is impossible. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God" (8). The teaching of the seventh of

Romans shows this, and the experience of every saint in time confirms it. Sooner or later each Christian has to learn it. One in the flesh is powerless, whatever may be his desires, to cope with the evil thing—the flesh which is in him.

Flesh.—The apostle has spoken of the flesh. A few words on the different senses in which this term is employed in the New Testament may be useful. We meet with flesh in its ordinary sense, as the flesh of men and of animals (1 Cor. xv. 39). We read of "flesh and blood," describing man in his present state of corporeal existence (1 Cor. xv. 50; Ephes. vi. 12), and of "flesh and spirit" as two parts of a man (Matt. xxvi. 41; 2 Cor. vii. 1). Then the human race is styled "all flesh" (Luke iii. 6; Acts ii. 17; Rom. iii. 20; 1 Cor. i. 29), and one in the body on earth is in the flesh (1 Pet. iv. 2), and earthly relations are called kinsmen according to the flesh (Rom. ix. 3), and judging of things in a natural way, one is said to judge according to the flesh (John viii. 15). Besides all this we meet with the term flesh in a *moral* sense, descriptive of the evil nature within us (Gal. v. 17), which lusts against the Spirit, and has works of which the apostle makes mention in that same chapter (19-21). Flesh used in this sense is of course opposed to the Spirit, as Rom. viii 4—8 makes plain. So the Christian is not to live after it (Rom. viii. 12, 13), and is to remember that those who are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts (Gal v. 24), God having crucified our old man with Christ. Besides this, it is used of the sensual part of man's nature, connected with his lusts, as distinguished from the evil of the mind (Ephes. ii. 3). Inattention to the different uses of this term flesh may lead to great confusion.

In the Spirit.—An important question next arises, how can we please God, the present revelation of whose requirements goes far beyond what was enjoined by the law (Matt. v.; 1 John iii. 16). "Walk in the Spirit," is the answer in Gal. v. 16, "and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." But to walk in the Spirit we must first be in the Spirit. Then only can we walk in, or after it. Now the Christian, as we have learnt in Rom. vii. 5, can view his being in the flesh as a wholly past

condition, and what is meant by being in the flesh we have already endeavoured to make plain (p. 70). Formerly in it, he is in it no longer. How, it may be asked, is this change brought about ? The Word will now tell us.

" Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you " (Rom. viii. 9). Hence of those only can it be predicated that they are not in the flesh, in whom the Spirit of God dwells. Now of none before Pentecost was that true. The Holy Spirit indeed quickened every saint from Abel downwards. He came too on certain vessels used of God in His service in the past, such as on Saul for a time, and on David for a continuance (1 Sam. x. 6; xvi. 13, 14). He fell on some, as Ezekiel (xi. 5), and came upon Balaam likewise (Numb. xxiv. 2). He filled others, as Bezaleel (Exod. xxxi. 3; xxiv. 31). He was upon Moses, and rested also on the seventy elders of Israel (Numb. xi. 17—26). In a variety of ways are the operations of the Spirit in power described in the Old Testament. But He did not dwell in any one of the saints of old. Of no one of them was it said that his body was a temple of the Holy Ghost. Of all true believers this is now to be affirmed (1 Cor. vi. 19); for by a true believer in the present dispensation is meant one who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of his sins. In each and in all such does He dwell. And though in apostolic times He filled some (Acts iv. 31; ix. 17; xiii. 9), and fell on some (x. 44), He indwelt every believer on the Lord Jesus Christ, each having received forgiveness of his sins. For the Spirit is given, as Peter declares, to them that obey God (Acts v. 32). The full teaching about the Holy Spirit is found chiefly in the writings of Paul. But in the Acts, wherein we read of its bestowal at times through the laying on of the apostles' hands (viii., xix.), we also learn of the normal way in which it could be received, and in connection with Peter's service both of them were exemplified.

Turning, then, to the Acts, where the record of Peter's labours can be found, we shall see that this gift was connected with the reception of the forgiveness of sins. Addressing the multitude on the day of Pentecost who were pricked to the heart by the simple, yet powerful sermon he had just delivered, he told them to repent,

and to be baptized every one of them in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and they would receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. In the house of Cornelius (x.) Peter was addressing, not Jews, but Gentiles, and he preached unto them forgiveness of sins through faith in Christ (43). On this occasion he was apparently stopped in his address by the bestowal on God's part of the gift of the Holy Ghost to his Gentile audience. They heard of forgiveness of sins through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. They believed on Him. They received forgiveness: and at once, without one moment's delay, God gave to each of them the Holy Ghost (47). In perfect harmony with that which took place at Cæsarea is the doctrine of Paul in the epistle to the Ephesians: "In whom after that ye (or, having) believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise," etc. (i. 13). In this way they were sealed. For the Holy Ghost is the seal, as well as the earnest, and also the unction (2 Cor. i. 21, 22). God thus marked them for His own, who had first believed the word of truth, the Gospel of their salvation. This was the normal way in apostolic times of receiving the Spirit. *Now* there is no other. And in receiving the Spirit such are indwelt by Him, and consequently are no longer in the flesh, but are in the Spirit.

Now when saying this it should be remembered, that the not being in the flesh does not in the teaching of Paul mean that such are not in the body, though the phrase can be employed in this sense. And it is so used by Peter, who writes of Christians as being in the flesh, and of the Lord as suffering in the flesh (1 Pet. iv. 1, 2). With Paul, however, in the Romans, this phrase is used to describe a condition of weakness as regards spiritual power, in which the saint is, whilst ranged under Adam's headship, and does not refer to the fact of his being in the body. In a word, Paul writes of that which *may* characterise a *saint* of God. Peter writes of that which *must* characterise every *individual* as long as he is upon earth. Now, to get free from that state of which Paul writes—the being in the flesh, in order to be in the Spirit, a condition the opposite of the former—the saint needs to be indwelt by the Holy Ghost. When this last becomes

true of him through grace, the other is also true; he is in the Spirit, and no longer in the flesh. " For ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you " (Rom. viii. 9). A child of God by the new birth, being born of water and of the Spirit (John iii.; 1 Pet. i.) the saint, Paul tells us, and the Act confirms it, needs a further operation of the Spirit in order to be what is called in the Spirit.

In Christ, or Christ's.—Now, where that has taken place another thing can be affirmed, *viz.*, that the saint who through the sovereign favour of God is the subject of such grace, now belongs to Christ, *i.e.*, he is of Christ, or " Christ's," a truth elsewhere expressed by the words, " in Christ." " Now," writes the apostle in our epistle, " if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His," *i.e.*, he is not of Him (9), he cannot yet be said to belong to Him. Hence to be of Christ, or Christ's, the possession of the Spirit, the Spirit of Christ is requisite. For He who has just been called the Spirit of God is now called the Spirit of Christ, for He was in the Lord when He was upon earth. Jesus, we read, was " full of the Holy Ghost " (Luke iv. 1). The Spirit then dwelling in the saint brings him to be in Christ, henceforth to belong to Christ, and so to be Christ's. We say *saint*, because we would repeat what has been said above, that more than the new birth, and something subsequent to it, is needed, ere the individual can be said to be " in Christ." We learn, then, from Rom. viii. 9, what it is that a saint needs in order to share in that, having previously seen what some of the blessings are that result from such a condition. He needs to have the Spirit. Such, and such only belong to Christ, and are ranged under His headship. For, as intimated already, the being in Christ, or being Christ's, *i.e.*, of Him, is the same thing. Gal. iii. 28, 29 makes this plain : " Ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's," etc. And 1 Cor. xv. 23 compared with 1 Thess. iv. 16 confirms it, the same people being designated as " Christ's " in the one place, and as those " in Christ " in the other.

Here a word of caution may be necessary. The apostle, writing that unless one has the Spirit of Christ he is not Christ's, did not mean that the man might not

be converted. He was writing of saints, and of saints only. It is saints who alone receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Remembering that will keep any from a misunderstanding about this; and observing what he writes, the reader will see the difference between being born again, and so becoming a saint of God, and the belonging to Christ. All who belong to Christ are saints. But all saints are not necessarily Christ's in the sense of Rom. viii. 9. A person is a child of God before he can be said to be in Christ.

Christ in Us.—Immense privileges are ours, but with corresponding responsibility. God regards us as in Christ. For the full results connected with this we wait, whilst taught about them in the Word. Meanwhile we are to remember that if we are Christ's, Christ is in us. This is now mentioned. "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness" (10). Christ being in us, His life, His walk is the standard, and the example for us as God's saints in the present dispensation (Matt. xi. 29; Eph. v. 2; 1 Pet. ii. 21). Nothing lower is set before us. A high standard, it may be said. True, but there is no other. Measured by it, every one must own that he has come short. How short! Now the effect of Christ being in us, if practically owned, will be that the body will be half as dead because of sin, for Christ is to be seen in our ways. If the body dominates us, it will lead into sin. It is therefore to be held as dead. Paul kept his body under (1 Cor. ix. 27). Is life here, then, to be after the manner of an anchorite's? That was not the character of Christ's life, the example given to us all. He is in us. And "the Spirit is life because of righteousness." The fruits produced by the Spirit will be in harmony with righteousness. Full scope there can be for all our energies if directed aright; and the difference between nature and person can be distinctly illustrated as the individual acts in harmony with the dictates of the new man, which are opposed to those of the old man. What a life of activity was the Lord's! The reader may see that in the brief record of one of His days on earth, as given us in the opening chapter of St. Mark's Gospel (i. 21—38).

The Body to be Quickened.—Is the state of things just referred to always to last? Must the body throughout eternity be held as dead? Will there be one part of that wonderful creature—man, originally formed by God (1 Thess. v. 23), which will never be allowed full scope for its energies? Has the fall so worked as to cripple for ever the body in its activity? A day is coming when a change will take place. To that we are here pointed. And in view of it the Spirit is spoken of under a new designation, *viz.*, as "the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead." If that Spirit dwell in us, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken our mortal bodies, because of (not, by) His Spirit that dwelleth in us (Rom. viii. 11). The body belongs to God. That of the Christian is precious to Him, since it is a temple now of the Holy Ghost. Because of that God will quicken it.

Briefly to recapitulate what has just passed before us: Three things are affirmed in this passage (9—11) consequent on the indwelling of the Spirit. 1st. All of whom that is true, are no longer in the flesh but are in the Spirit. 2nd. They belong to Christ. They are Christ's. 3rd. Their mortal bodies will in the future be quickened. This last, however, can only be effected when the Lord comes for His saints. But quickening is spoken of, not resurrection; for the change indicated will concern all the saints, whether raised or not. Conformity to Christ's body of glory will take place in our bodies (Phil. iii. 21). We shall then bear the image of the heavenly. This leads us naturally to the *third* great division of the Gospel—freedom from the *presence* of sin, for which, though now assured, we have in patience to wait.

Holiness.—The true way of holiness has now been unfolded. It is death with Christ to sin. Not the effort to die, but the truth that we have thus died carried out in practice. Not, let us remember, that we died *in* Christ; for none were, nor could have been *in* Him then (John xii. 24). We have died *with* Him, because *now* in Him. How different is this from the teaching of Buddhism, and of that of corrupted Christianity. All will agree in the confession of evil in man, which has to be overcome; but

only in true Christian teaching is found the solution of the question. How can the evil be effectually dealt with? Therein we learn how the life and death of Christ are needful for this, but in the inverse order. We must begin with His death, ere we can practically profit by His life. We have died with Him to sin, that we might live to God. Owning His death we can profit by His life. "He that eateth My flesh" and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me" (John vi. 56, 57). Such was the Lord's teaching when on earth, as to profiting by His death. It receives elucidation by the ministry of the apostle, taught of the Holy Ghost.

C. Freedom from the Presence of Sin.—Chapter viii. 12-39.

X.

The Extent of this Deliverance.

Chapter VIII. 12—30.

FULL, and far-reaching are the glad tidings of God. Nothing short of the complete and final deliverance of the Christian from sin in every sense will meet the Divine requirements. The pursuit of this subject then necessarily carries us on to the future; for whilst in these bodies of humiliation we never can be freed from the presence of sin, which is hateful to God, and in measure to every one of His children.

Of this deliverance we now learn, both as it concerns ourselves, and as it concerns also creation (12—30). After which this grand subject of the Gospel of God is brought to a fitting conclusion, with a burst of triumphant challenges thrown out to every intelligent creature in the universe (31-39). Now we find ourselves in a different circle of thoughts from those which have been prominently put before us, though in perfect harmony with all that we have read. On neither the blood of Christ, nor on the death of Christ does the Holy Ghost dwell in vv. 12-30, though the words, "whom He justified" (30) necessarily remind us of the atoning sacrifice; but prominence is given to teaching about the Spirit, whilst we are taught to wait for the exercise of Divine power, which will for ever deliver the person of the Christian, and this* creation too, from the presence of sin. The introduction of creation, as interested in the display of that power about which the Gospel treats, is calculated to give us enlarged thoughts of the extent of the sorrow and ruin proceeding from the fall, and also of God's purposes connected with the death of Christ. For it is on the ground of His death that sin can be taken away, as John the Baptist declared (John i.

* We have said *this* creation, because, though the atoning sacrifice beneficially affects heavenly things as well, according to Heb. ix. 23, the scope in Rom. viii. seems limited to that which was subjected to vanity by reason of the fall (20).

29), and the Epistle to the Hebrews confirms (ix. 26). Further, the mention of creation's interest in the Lord's death, found in this third division of the Gospel, should enhance our sense of God's grace to us, which meets the need of the conscience, and provides for the walk of God's children, before creation reaps any benefit from that which took place at Calvary.

Teaching about the Spirit.—To come to details as to the Spirit. We read of mortifying through the Spirit the deeds of the body (13); of being led by the Spirit (14); of the Spirit bearing witness with our spirit (16); of the first-fruits of the Spirit (23); of His helping our infirmities (26); and of the Spirit Himself making intercession for us (26). The prominence here given to this subject—the Holy Ghost—should be noticed. For in the first part of the Gospel (iii. 21-v. 11), as we have seen, the Spirit is only mentioned once (v. 5). In the second part (v. 12-viii. 11), the subject of the Holy Ghost is not introduced till the eighth chapter (viii. 2). In this, the third part, it holds the foremost place. His ministry to us, and for us is needed throughout our wilderness career.

Death or Life.—What the flesh is, and what it leads to—death, have been stated. It is plain that no blessed result for the Christian can ever arise from it: and the future we learn must not be kept out of view. "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh" (12). We owe it, to keep up the simile, nothing at all. All that it can do is to land its votaries in death—the second death really. "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall (or, are about to) die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (13). Life everlasting, or death, this is the true alternative. There are just two ways, the broad and the narrow; the one leads to destruction, the other to life (Matt. vii. 13, 14). There are two motive powers to act on the Christian. Either he lives after the flesh, or by the Spirit he mortifies the deeds of the body. Following the former he will end in death. Making use of the latter he will end in life. For these, death and life, are evidently here viewed as future, and as denoting the final condition of the whole man, consequent on the

character of his walk upon earth.

Sons and Children.—"Through the Spirit," the apostle has just written, for we need divine power to mortify the deeds of the body. Now those who make use of that power are sons of God, and they thus prove it. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God: and if children, then heirs: heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together" (14-17). Hitherto in this epistle, with the exception of the apostolic salutation of grace and peace from God the Father (i. 7), we have seen Christians viewed only as saints and as servants.

Now their relationship to God is directly stated. They are His sons, and also His children (14, 16). His sons they prove themselves to be, when led of the Spirit. The reader should mark in v. 14 that the apostle wrote "sons," not "the sons," describing what characterised such. They are sons. His children they know they are, the Spirit witnessing with their spirit to it. Now these are distinct favours, though of course closely connected. Not every child in this world can say he is a son. Not every one enjoying the place and privilege of a son is necessarily a child. Child speaks of the birth-tie; son of position in contrast to that of a bond-servant. Christians are both sons of God, and children of God. Saints before the cross were God's children, but could not individually be called God's sons, as Gal. iii. 23-iv. 7 teaches us; though Israel, as a nation, was called God's son (Exod. iv. 22). Under the law saints were under a schoolmaster, and like those under age, who are under tutors and governors, they were in bondage under the elements of the world. All that is changed for the Christian. He is, whatever his natural extraction may be, a son of God through believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. "For," writes the apostle, "ye are all the sons (not, children) of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26). Born of God by the quickening power of the Word, and so becoming children; the becoming sons, we learn, is connected

with belief in a special testimony in that Word, *viz.*, faith in Christ Jesus. Of none, therefore, before the first advent, could that have been true. By and by there will be the public manifestation (or rather, revelation) of the sons of God (Rom. viii. 19). Then the universe will learn and behold who they are. Now each Christian may know that he is one, and being led of the Spirit he shows it, and having the Spirit of adoption can cry, Abba—the Aramaic word for Father.

Heirs and Joint-Heirs.—But since we are not only sons but also children, we read that "the Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together," *i.e.*, with Him (16, 17). What a prospect is here opened out to us! What a portion is ours! A prospect, a portion, with which our God and Father would have every real Christian to be acquainted whilst he is still upon earth. And learning of this, the feelings of the heart may find fitting expression in the language of the Lord by the spirit of prophecy, "Many, O Lord my God, are Thy wonderful works which Thou hast done, and Thy thoughts which are to usward" (Ps. xl. 5). Children! Heirs! God's heirs! Joint-heirs with Christ! Man never dreamt of such privileges, such an inheritance. No system of religion of human invention has suggested that such favours could be procured for its votaries. No creature could have supposed that any of fallen Adam's race could become God's heirs, and joint-heirs with His Son. But how simply is all this told out! Who, we may well say, but God the Spirit would have stated it in such a way? Concise, yet full; simple, yet grand. Heirs of God! No portion can be conceived more full than such an announcement conveys to us. Joint-heirs with Christ! No inheritance more blessed, none to be desired more than this. What earthly inheritance can compare with it?

Suffering with Christ.—But what is the present condition on earth of these heirs? Objects indeed of Divine favour, and subjects of angelic service (Heb. i. 14), may they look for a bed of roses, or for a triumphant progress through this world? Is it not written that

we must through *much* tribulation enter into the kingdom of God? (Acts xiv. 22) Joint-heirs with Christ! Suffering was His lot: suffering with Him is to be their lot. How gracious of God to tell us this! How gracious indeed to bestow on us such a privilege! But no religious system of human invention would have predicted that God's heir, and His Son's joint-heirs, should have to suffer in any part of God's creation? Where *He* has sway, why should *they* suffer? A riddle this, incapable of solution by man, but now plain to us. Would any murmur then, or shrink back, deterred by the fear of what they might have to encounter? How encouraging, how cheering is the prospect beyond. Now suffering with Christ: then to be glorified with Him. To nothing short of this does the Gospel of God bid us look forward, and in the certainty that it will be made good. We have seen what the Lord did by suffering *for* us. We have been taught that we have died *with* Him to sin. We learn here that if we suffer *with* Him, we shall be glorified *with* Him. Into what associations with Him have we been, and shall we be brought!

Paul's Experience.—Now follows the recorded experience of one who suffered with Christ, and was thus suffering at that time. We know that the Master has gone before, and we are only asked to follow in His steps. Alas, how faltering and irresolute often have been our steps! Here one of like passions with us now speaks, and records what he has proved, who suffered as few, if any, of the apostles, or disciples ever suffered (Acts ix. 16). "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in (rather, to) us." He had carefully estimated the two—present sufferings, and future glory. For himself it was a settled thing that the latter far outweighed the former. Now he was not speaking without adequate experience, as the list of trials he had passed through, recorded in 2 Cor. xi. 23-27, abundantly testified. Writing to the Corinthians (1 Cor. iv. 9-13) on an earlier occasion, he reminded them of the treatment which had been meted out to him and other of the apostles, "set forth last," as he writes (in allusion, some think, to the spectacles in the amphitheatre) "as appointed unto death."

Addressing that same company in his second epistle, he acquaints them with the heavy trouble he had but recently encountered at Ephesus (2 Cor. i. 8-10). Addressing the Colossians years afterwards, he explains that in all he passed through, he was but filling up that which was lacking of the afflictions of Christ in his flesh (Col. i. 24), that is, what he was appointed to suffer (Acts ix. 16). Who then was more competent to speak on such a subject than Paul? How clearly does he express himself after years of suffering for Christ! "I reckon," he writes, "that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us (18)." What must the future have been to him! What encouragement should his experience be to all saints!

Creation's Future.—The apostle speaks, be it remarked, of the glory which should be revealed *to* us, as he really wrote, and not simply of our being in glory, all true and sure as this last is. For his eye by faith was surveying a scene on which no creature has ever yet looked, *viz.*, creation itself resting in the calm delight of the liberty of the glory of the children of God (21). The divine purposes, as revealed in the Gospel, are not bounded by, nor confined to, the blessing of God's saints; creation animate and inanimate is concerned in them likewise. And the Creator has given it to expect this. He thinks of His created *things*, as well as of His *saints*. He thought of the cattle at Nineveh (Jonah iv. 11). He thought of every living thing upon the earth after the flood (Gen. ix. 8-17). He will care for creation in the coming day. How creation comes to understand this it is not for us to say. But it would be strange indeed if the Creator could not communicate with everything that He has brought into being, and be also the interpreter to His intelligent creatures of the earnest expectation of the to us non-intelligent creation. He alone, of course, was competent to do this. He has done it; and by Paul, a vessel of revelation, this is made known to us: "The earnest expectation of the creature (*i.e.*, creation) waiteth for the manifestation (or, revelation) of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the

same, in hope because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory (not, the glorious liberty, as the Authorised Version has unhappily given it) of the children of God" (Rom. viii. 19-21).

Creation waits, but in hope for the sons of God to be revealed. Of this expectation other Scriptures also speak. Its utterance when the Lamb took the book to open the seals thereof (Rev. v. 13) John heard, and in his prophetic book has recounted. Its rejoicings on the Lord appearing to reign the Psalmist has in beautiful language predicted (Ps. xcvi. 11-13; xcviii. 7-9); and at the close of that book (Ps. cl. 6) he calls on every creature which hath breath to praise the Lord, a call which will not have been made in vain, and to which, it would seem, not men only will respond.* Here in Romans its *expectation* of the revelation of the sons of God is declared, an intimation of that of which otherwise we must have been ignorant. Further, taken back to the past, we learn how it got into that condition of sorrow, out of which it is by-and-by to be delivered. In the opening of the epistle we saw how men got into savagery and heathenish ways. Here we learn how it was that creation became subject to vanity. It was subjected to it, not willingly. Adam fell. By him sin, which weighs on creation, entered the world, and God cursed the ground for man's sake. Was creation, then, for ever to be subjected to consequences arising from that one act of transgression on Adam's part? Are some of that man's descendants to enjoy redemption in its fulness, and creation, which shared, but not willingly, in the results of the disobedience of its head for evermore to groan, never, never to get relief? Far otherwise is God's thought for it. But here again His grace to us shines out. We get, as already stated, full deliverance, and shall be in glory ere creation will get *any* relief. It hopes for deliverance. It *will* enter into it, freed from all corruption, to rejoice in the liberty of the glory of the children of God. How narrow often are our thoughts, not ranging beyond the circle of our blessings! How wide, how glorious are God's thoughts! How

* Some would restrict this to men, but with Gen. vii. 22 before us the words "hath breath" may include animals as well.

worthy, too, of Him we must say when we see them as He unfolds them in His Gospel.

Creation's Present Condition. — Creation's future unfolded, its present condition is next touched upon (22). It "groans and travails in pain together until now." In this it is not singular. "Ourselves," writes Paul, "which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption—the redemption of our body (23)." Our whole person will be delivered. Creation will also be delivered. Now it groans, and travails in pain. Now we groan also—we who have received the firstfruits of the Spirit, we groan within ourselves. How widespread is the sorrow caused by sin, that even we who have received the Spirit, here called the firstfruits (because, now bestowed on believers, He will by-and-by be poured out on all flesh) groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption—the redemption of the body. Creation waits, and we wait. Creation waits to enter into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. We wait for adoption, the redemption of our body. Freedom from the presence of sin both expect. In the liberty of the glory of the *children* of God creation desires to have part. For adoption—the redemption of our body we are looking; for we are sons, as well as children. But till creation gets full deliverance (and that cannot be till the new heavens and the new earth appear) the divine purposes will not receive their full accomplishment. To this God has always looked forward. Of it John the Baptist spoke in his first utterance concerning the Lamb of God (John i. 29). For it God has provided by the sacrifice of His Son (Heb. ix. 26).* To it we are taught to look forward by Peter also, and by John (2 Peter iii. 13: Rev. xxi. 1).

Adoption.—But a nearer expectation is ours—and that in connection with being God's sons. We wait for adoption, which, we see, involves here the redemption of our body. Of adoption Paul alone speaks in the New

* Heb. ii. 9 may be quoted for this also, if it be admissible to translate "tasted death for every *thing*." So translating it, the passage (7—18) shows the importance of the Lord's death in regard to creatures (9); in regard to the saints (10, 15, 18); in regard to the devil (14); and in regard to the demands of God's holiness and righteousness (17).

Testament, as he is the only epistolary writer who calls Christians *sons*, one passage in the writings of John excepted (Rev. xxi. 7). For adoption, as used by Paul, means the having openly the place of a son, the one adopted being put into that place or position to the one who adopts him, who in our case is God. Men on earth can adopt those who have nothing to do with them; God only bestows such a privilege on those who are His children. The birth-tie is theirs, who are to be publicly displayed as the sons of the living God. Now this privilege belongs to God's earthly people, Israel (Rom. ix. 4); and will surely in the future be openly and blessedly made good to them. But, thanks be to Him, we Christians share in the adoption in a way more glorious and blessed than they will, though we cannot enjoy it whilst in our bodies of humiliation. For adoption concerns, as is evident, when the term is understood, our whole *person*, and is not to be limited to *soul* blessing; so it necessarily involves for us the redemption of our body. Now from all eternity God has prepared this adoption for us. It is an essential part of that calling (Eph. i. 5) of which now we are to know the hope (Eph. i. 18). Hence we have now the spirit of adoption (Rom. viii. 15), Christ having died that believers might share in this blessing (Gal. iv. 5), though we wait for the redemption of the body to enjoy it. But we wait for it; being saved in hope, which, of course, implies an expectation not yet made good. For " hope that is seen, is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for ? But, if we hope for what we see not, then do we with patience wait for it " (24, 25).

The Intercession of the Spirit.—Abounding indeed is the grace of God ! But all that grace has not yet by the apostle been unfolded, though the Gospel of God does not, as set forth in Romans, carry us any further into the future. We have learnt of creation's groanings, and of its expectations. We have been reminded too that we groan, whilst waiting for that which is before us. Now we learn what God has provided for us in the present, who groan being burdened. That is nothing less than the advocacy of the Holy Ghost on our behalf. What a blessing to be a saint of God ! What privileges

to be a child, and a son of God! Such an one has an Advocate on high with the Father—Jesus Christ the righteous (1 John ii. 1), and an Advocate on earth with God, even the Holy Ghost. One uses the term *Advocate* advisedly, since the Lord in John xiv. 16 announced, as the fruit of His asking the Father, the coming of another Comforter, or Advocate (for the word in John xiv. 16, and in 1 John ii. 1, is the same in the original), who would abide with the disciples for ever. Not, be it remarked, one in His place, but another. And here in Romans viii. 26 we learn something of that other Comforter's advocacy on behalf of the saints. *Saints*, we say, because it is of God, not of the Father, that this passage speaks. I John ii. 1 speaks of advocacy with the Father, for it is our sinning which there calls forth the activity of the Advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous. Our passage in Romans treats of advocacy with God, because it is the infirmity of the saint which calls it forth. How perfect and truly gracious is all this. The failing one is reminded that he is still a child, whatever he may have done. The feeble groaning saint is reminded of God, the mighty One, against whom no creature can prevail, and of the Divinely appointed Advocate to take up his cause before God, when that saint knows not what to ask as he ought. "The Spirit Himself," then we learn, "maketh intercession with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for saints according to the will of God" (26, 27).

God and the Spirit thus occupied with the feeble groaning saint! Again we have to say, by nothing short of Divine revelation could we have known this. The saint may feel that he does not know what to ask, as he suffers with Christ, and groans whilst awaiting the redemption of his body. He may at times feel himself alone on earth, in isolation of spirit from those immediately around him. But is he alone, who has the other Comforter taking such an active part on his behalf, and entering so deeply into his sorrows? Is he alone, who has such an intercessor interceding for him according to God? Do we not at times perhaps forget this? Yet, thank God, the other Comforter does not forget us: He,

the Spirit of God, intercedes with God. That intercession must then be in perfect harmony with the mind of God. How this speaks of unabated concern on the part of our God in all that His people are passing through. God is not indifferent to their groanings. Nor are they, it is evident, to be stoics, or by some imaginative feeling to affect superiority to circumstances. No. We are feeble men and women. God knows it. And He has provided the other Comforter for us in our need. To sit down in despair would be to *forget* that the Spirit intercedes. To affect to be above feeling the sorrows would be really to despise this provision in ministry for us, which our God has so graciously revealed.

All Things Working for God.—We may not at times know what to pray for as we ought, " but we do know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" (28). For the end is sure, being the subject of Divine revelation, though about all that we meet with by the way we may not at the time have an understanding. Looking back on the past, we may see the wisdom and purpose of God in former difficulties abundantly made plain. Hence experience might suggest that all will turn out well. Poor Jacob said in the bitterness of his grief, when asked to allow Benjamin to go down into Egypt with his brethren, " Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me " (Gen. xlii. 36). We are to use very different language, for God's purposes about us now stand revealed. " For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified " (29, 30).

God's Purposes about His Son.—Into the past, and into the future, are we here permitted to gaze; time being, as it were, an island in the midst of the sea of eternity, from which we can look before and behind on a boundless ocean. God foreknew, mark, not man, is it said, but a class, *i.e.*, it is not the race as a whole of

which the apostle writes, but of individuals—the called both of Jews and Gentiles. God foreknew such, and formed a purpose about them—predestined them to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren. Brethren for His Son He would seek. Companions, fellows for Him (Ps. xlv. 7; Heb. i. 9) He would provide, not out of the ranks of angels, but from amongst men. Now these should be conformed to the image of His Son, should be like Him. He as the Head of a race is to be, like Adam, surrounded by those who shall bear His image. Of this purpose both Paul and John have written, each too marking the difference between the saint as he is, and as he will be. "It doth not yet appear (or, is not yet made manifest) what we shall be. We know that when (or, if) He shall appear (or, be manifested) we shall be like Him: for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John iii. 2). So wrote John. "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." (1 Cor. xv. 49). So wrote Paul, who in addition has stated what is the true expectation of himself and of other Christians. "Our citizenship is in the heavens, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change (or, transform) the body of our humiliation, to be fashioned like to His body of glory, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. iii. 20, 21). We have learnt of our standing before God. We have been taught of our relationship to Him. We have been evangelised as to the redemption of the body. Now we learn to whom we shall be like, whose image we shall bear—the image of His Son. Wonderful favour indeed this is, as yet but very faintly understood. But why are we predestined to this? Let us hear and adore, "That He might be the first-born among many brethren." God has purposes in store for Him, and this is one of them, and in working it out we are to share in such marvellous favour.

Purposing, foreknowing, predestinating, calling, in these ways has the Divine mind and the Divine will been in exercise. Ere the earth was enveloped in chaotic darkness, and when man was a creation of God unknown,

and undreamt of by any intelligent creature, God purposed to have many brethren for the Son of His love. He foreknew them, He chose them from the beginning (2 Thess. ii. 13). He predestined them to bear the image of His Son in the eternity of the future. Meanwhile, in time He began to call them by His grace, and to bring them to learn with worshipping hearts to what it is that they are really destined. And so surely will His gracious purpose be carried out, that it can be spoken of as if already completed. Yet, as is right and proper, God's purpose about His Son is first stated, and then the carrying out of that purpose in blessing to saints is declared to be in active operation, "Whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified." Glorified we then shall be, for God has purposed it. Shall we exalt ourselves in our own eyes as we think of it? Who could, who will do that in the presence of the First-born, who had to die for us to enjoy it. The grace to us is wonderful. But the revelation of it in connection with the mention of the First-born should be sufficient to check all tendency to self-exaltation. We shall be with Him where He is, glorified together. Yet in all things He must have the pre-eminence (Col. i. 18.)

More Pauline Terms.—Here, again, we must pause in our progress through the epistle, to notice some terms now met with; terms, as here we see, peculiar to the writings of St. Paul. The apostle has spoken of those "called according to God's *purpose*," and of those *predestinated* by Him—a line of teaching essentially Pauline. God purposed in the distant past, and in time carries out His purposes. All has been foreknown to Him, who is gradually, but surely, accomplishing what He has planned. Now these purposes are found to concern His saints, and also His Church; for, in speaking of the Divine purposes, these two must be distinguished. All true members of the assembly are God's saints; but all His saints are not component parts of the assembly which the Lord Jesus Christ has built (Matt. xvi. 18).

If we think, then, of God's *purposes* in connection with His *saints*, we have to say that each is called in

accordance with it (Rom. viii 28; 2 Tim. i. 9). If, on the other hand, we think of His purpose in connection with the *Church*, we have to say that, "now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenlies might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose (or, purpose of the ages), which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. iii. 10, 11). But wider, yea, more comprehensive is the purpose of our God, and in that of which we are about to speak it awaits altogether its fulfilment. He has purposed in the dispensation of the fulness of times to gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth (Eph. i. 9, 10). Till then, these Divine purposes, though revealed, will not all be perfected. What a display will that be, when the mystery of God's will is accomplished, and His Son is seen as Head over all things in heaven and on earth.

Of *predestination* we must now speak. This, where persons are concerned, has reference only to saints, and is not spoken of the Church. Saints, individuals, are predestinated. And to what? To adoption, to be conformed to the image of God's Son, and to share in the inheritance provided for them. We are predestinated unto adoption by Jesus Christ unto God Himself (Eph. i. 5). We are predestinated to bear the image of God's Son, as we have already seen in our epistle (Rom. viii. 29, 30); and we are also predestinated to have part in the inheritance, when all things in heaven and on earth shall be put under Christ according to God's purpose (Ephes. i. 11). Heaven and earth, be it remarked, not heaven only, a foreshadowing of which we may trace in Israel's history. God gave them as their inheritance the land east of Jordan to posses (Numb. xxi. 24-35; Deut. ii. 24, 31; iii. 12), as well as the land of Canaan on the west of that river, which is typical of death. His purpose seems to have been that all should have passed over Jordan to dwell on the west of it, whilst inheriting also a portion of the east. We know the failure in connection with that. By-and-by all the tribes will be located west of Jordan (Ezek. xlvii. 13-23) whilst they shall feed in Bashan and Gilead as in the days of old (Micah vii. 14). So Christians, though in heaven, will have earth as part of their inheritance as well. All then will be

accomplished. So, viewing all from the standpoint of the Divine purpose, the apostle sees it, as it were, fulfilled; and writes, "whom He justified, them He also glorified." "The Lord will give grace and glory," wrote the Psalmist (lxxxiv. 11). Living between the cross and the glory, we can say, He has given grace, He will give glory.

XI.

Three Triumphant Challenges.

Chapter viii. 31-39.

1. **Who is against us?**—The apostle's heart was full. He had opened up the Gospel of God, which, meeting the guilty one in his need, tells him how he is justified, and assures him that he shall be glorified. We can understand, then, the spirit of triumph in which he asks, "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be (or, is) against us?" a matter of all importance is this. It was so to Joshua, when he saw the man with his sword drawn over against Jericho. On whose behalf was he there? Joshua must get that settled, hence he asked, "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" The answer satisfied the son of Nun, and set him at rest. The captain of the Lord's hosts it was whom he had addressed. God was then for Israel. Victory was certain (Josh. v. 13-15). God is for us, we too can say, and can triumphantly throw down the gauntlet, and ask, "Who is against us?" Now on what can such confidence rest? Not on frames, or feelings, not on surmises, or unstable promises; but on ground which can never change, the love of God as displayed in the gift of His Son. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all; how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. viii. 32).

The Spirit of God teaches us to reason, that we may draw the fitting conclusion from the revelation of divine grace. God spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all. What, then, will He withhold that is fitting for us to receive? What saints, whether Jews or Gentiles, once were we have learnt in chaps. i.-iii. of our epistle. Their deserts no one could for one moment question. Yet God gave up His Son for them. Now, are we to think of this merely as a record of the past? Far otherwise. This record of the past is to give us unbounded confidence in our God in the present, and in the future. Nothing, we are to rest assured, will He withhold from us, which a creature could for its blessing receive. Much, indeed, of divine grace has passed before us in the unfolding of the

Gospel. Here we learn that God will continue to manifest Himself to His people in the character of a *giver*. If He spared not His own Son (how much there is in those few words !) what can there be too precious for Him to bestow? With Him will He freely give us all things. Such is the character of our God, made known to us through the cross. What confidence in our God, we would again say, is the surrender to death of His Son to impart ! What boldness before all hostile powers is the weakest saint encouraged to manifest ! Peter, in prison at Jerusalem (Acts xii.); Paul, in conflict at Ephesus (2 Cor. i. 8-10); the apostolic company in Acts v.; could each tell their tale, illustrative of this triumphant challenge, " If God be for us, who is against us ? "

2. **Who shall Condemn**.—A second question is now asked, " Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect ? "(33). Much might doubtless be adduced against each one of the company designated as God's elect, without in the least overstepping the bounds of sober truth. A moment's reflection on the reader's part will be sufficient to satisfy him as to that, and we have but to take the history of the writer of this challenge, as given by himself (1 Tim. i. 13), to know that much might be brought against him, which he had for long condemned. God, however, being for us—His elect, let the enemy, if he will, let opponents on earth if they can, catalogue every failure of any one of us, their labour will all be in vain. God will not listen to a *single* accusation. " It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth ? " Simple and joyous statement ! God justifies. Triumphant conclusion. " Who is he that condemneth ? " We are not, however, to stop here. The apostle proceeds, " It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, (or better, was raised), who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us " (34). The eye and the heart are turned to God, and to Christ. What God has done: *viz.*, justified us. Who it was who died—Christ. What has been done for Him—He has been raised from the dead, an act of sovereign Divine power. Where Christ is who died—at the right hand of God. What He is doing for the saints—interceding for them. To all this are the saints turned as irrefragable proofs

that none can condemn them.

How fully has their cause been espoused. Christ intercedes for them. He who has trodden the path down here, He it is who intercedes on high for the saints. Well must He know what is needed, and all that is needed, for He suffered being tempted. Now, accepted on their behalf, He remembers them, and intercedes for them before Him who turns a deaf ear to every charge made against them. Thus two things, which are terrible often to men in anticipation: *viz.*, what can be *done* against them, and what can be *said* against them, are for God's saints despoiled of all their terror, since God is for them, and Christ intercedes for them. Truly they may say, "They that be with us are more than they that be with them" (2 Kings vi. 16). What comfort would God impart! He is for us. He justifies us. He has spoken. The cause is ended.

3. **Who shall Separate?**—Nor is this all. In the presence of hostile powers, exposed to the malice of enemies, battling with circumstances, facing death perhaps, and enduring hardships, a third triumphant challenge is boldly thrown out; but like the others to find no one to take it up. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter" (35, 36). What answer is there to this? We may well listen to one who was competent to reply, having graduated very high in the school of suffering. "Nay," he says, "in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us (37)." Circumstances, then, however adverse, cannot separate us from the love of Christ, nor powers, we next learn, from the love of God. And here again Paul, so competent to speak, acquaints the saints in Rome with his firm persuasion as to it. "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers" (for in such order we should read these clauses) "nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (38, 39)." Bold yet sober language,

evidencing the confidence of faith, very different from vain boasting, or bombastic utterances, *I am persuaded*, writes St. Paul. He had proved what God's love was to him in the past. He could count on it throughout his whole career. No power *had* deprived him of its enjoyment, no power *could*, he was sure. And if he were to be alone, as at times he was, that love would reach him and sustain his heart—the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, the love of Him who gave His Son for Paul. What creature can hinder the outflow of God's love to the objects of it? Creatures however formidable, what are they when opposed to God?

Here the unfolding of the Gospel of God in the Romans ends, though much teaching in connection with it has still to be enforced. The Gospel we then learn is a Gospel for saints as well as for sinners, and embraces far more in its range than merely the deliverance of the guilty one from the coming wrath, of great importance though that is for us who deserve it. To other subjects connected with the Gospel we have now to turn, ever remembering the triumphant conclusion,

> Not tribulation, nakedness;
> Nor famine, peril, nor the sword,
> Nor persecution, nor distress,
> Shall separate from Christ the Lord.
>
> Nor life, nor death, nor depth, nor height,
> Nor powers below, nor powers above.
> Nor present things, nor things to come,
> Can change God's purposes of love.—WATTS.

The Principles of the Gospel in Harmony with God's ways with Israel.—Chapters ix.-xi.

XII.

God's Ways with Israel in the Past, and His Word about them and the Gentiles.—Chapters ix., x.

ALL have sinned." "There is none righteous, no not one." "Both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin." "It is one God, who shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith." With these statements before the reader a question might naturally arise, how can the principles displayed in the Gospel be reconciled with God's ways in the past with Israel, and with His promises to that people? God had singled them out from the nations, had invested them with special privileges, and separated them to Himself. How then put them now on one common level with Gentiles? How bless them equally, and together? To a consideration of this important subject the apostle addresses himself.

Paul's Desire for his Nation.—Malice had worked in many a Jew's heart against Paul, because he proclaimed and maintained the freedom of Divine grace to flow out to Gentiles as much as to Jews. His most persistent opponents in his evangelistic service had been men of his own nation, as the Acts of the Apostles show, and his letter to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. ii. 16) confirms. What those at Jerusalem thought of him, their language, and their actions on the occasion of his last recorded visit to that metropolis, put beyond the reach of misconception (Acts xxi. 28-36; xxii. 22, 23). "Away with him," they cried. "Away with such a fellow from the earth; for it was not fit that he should live." 'Tis true he was the apostle of the Gentiles, set apart for that work by the God of their fathers (Gal. i. 15, 16). Had he become on that account alienated in heart from them? Far from it. He had great heaviness and continual sorrow (or, pain) in his heart, for he had wished himself accursed from Christ for his brethren,

his kinsmen according to the flesh. (Rom. ix. 2, 3). "*My* brethren, *my* kinsmen, according to the flesh," he wrote. His nationality he had not forgotten, nor would he disown it; though a spiritual relationship with every true Christian he rejoiced to confess. And though Christian brotherly love, as Scripture writes of it, is restricted to the family of God, his heart could, and did go out to those of his kinsmen, according to the flesh, who had remained unconverted.* Further his interest in them could not be surpassed by any mortal, though it might have been matched perhaps by that which is recorded of Moses in Exod. xxxii. 32. For he had wished himself accursed from Christ for them, referring doubtless to the law of Levit. xxvii. 29, the text of which thus runs: "None devoted, which shall be devoted of men, shall be redeemed; but shall surely be put to death." The readers of the Septuagint would remember that they translated and rightly the Hebrew word *cherem* by the well-known Greek term *anathema*, here used by the apostle. For those thus devoted there was no redemption. Death was their allotted and irrevocable portion. In the urgency then of his desire for the salvation of his people he had even wished to be devoted to destruction, if by that he might have saved them.

What was this People?—No ordinary affection had thus moved him, for no ordinary people were they, as he now recounts. They were Israelites, descandants of Jacob, who had received that name from the One who had wrestled with him, and then blessed him by the ford Jabbok, at the spot which the patriarch in consequence named Peniel (Gen. xxxii. 30). He gave a name to the place. God gave a name to him. Peniel, he named the place. Israel, God surnamed him. Israelites, then betokened their descent from him, who as a prince had power with God and with men, and had prevailed. Israelite was no mean name to bear. It told of natural descent from him, to whom, and to his seed the promise of the land for an inheritance was freely, and irrevocably confirmed (Gen. xxxv. 12; xlviii. 4). To them as a

* Some of his own kinsmen were Christians already, as Andronicus, Junias, Herodion, Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater (Rom. xvi. 7, 11, 21).

nation great and special privileges belonged: *viz.*, "the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the promises: whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen" (Rom. ix. 4-5). An array of privileges, an accumulation of honours unparalleled. "What nation," Moses had asked, "is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon Him for?" (Deut. iv. 7). What nation has ever been so highly favoured? we may well ask, having the world's history of upwards of forty centuries to look back upon. How the apostle too would emphasise their privileges, putting as he does, the copulative conjunction *and* between each one of them.

The *adoption* was theirs, as the Lord announced to Pharaoh, "Israel is My son, even My first-born: and I say unto thee, Let My son go, that he may serve Me" (Exod. iv. 22, 23). The *glory* it had been the privilege of their father often to see, and to know that it was in their midst, upon the mercy-seat (Levit. xvi. 2) *Covenants* too they could speak of. The first, made at Sinai, between God and them (Exod. xxiv.), broken, alas, ere six weeks had run its course, by their making the golden calf. The second made by God with Moses and Israel unconditionally, in accordance with which the Lord brought them into the land (Exod. xxxiv. 10-27). The third, made by God with Israel in the land of Moab, on the observance of which, and of that made at Sinai, depended their continuance in the land (Deut. xxix 1.). A fourth there is, yet to be made with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, called the *new* covenant. Of this Jeremiah prophesied (Jer. xxxi. 31-34). To it the Lord referred, and first announced, that joy being rightly His, on the blood of what sacrifice it would be established (Matt. xxvi. 28). And to it the writer of the Hebrews calls especial attention (viii.; x. 16-18), as teaching us of the abiding efficacy of the blood of Christ. Then too the *giving of the law* was theirs, the ten commandments having been audibly promulgated by the voice of God Himself; so it could be said, that they alone of all nations had heard the voice of the living God speaking to

them out of the fire, and lived (Deut. v. 26). To them, too, and to them only was there given a *ritual* for Divine worship. To them, too, were *promises* made by God, which through the coming of the Lord Jesus were in process of fulfilment. Looking back to the past the *fathers*, as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc., could be claimed as belonging to them. And from Israel, to crown it all, Christ came after the flesh, who is, not merely a man, but is over all, God blessed for ever.*

Now were all these just enumerated simply matters of the past, which the introduction of the Gospel completely and for ever set aside? Is Israel's national position lost for ever? Clearly that is not the case, for "all Israel shall be saved" (Rom. xi. 26). Did the principles manifested in the Gospel clash with God's way with Israel? No, we must again exclaim, whilst maintaining God's right to bless now some who have been Gentiles equally with some who once were Jews. Into this subject the apostle enters, referring repeatedly in proof of what he advances to the Old Testament Scriptures, though surely handling them in a way which his opponents had never dreamt of, as he cuts all ground of complaint which they thought they had against the Gospel completely from under their feet, and demonstrates that the principles illustrated by that Gospel, which they rejected, were similar to those on which their national position rested. In a previous part of the epistle (v. 12-18) we have seen him effectively dealing with the complaint of injustice on God's part in making Adam's race liable to the consequences of Adam's sin. Now he will again vindicate God's ways in grace from all charge of injustice, by proofs and arguments drawn from that very book to which the Jew appealed in support of his contention. This he does by reminding his readers, *first* of God's ways with Israel in the past; *next* of the word of God about Israel and the Gentiles; and *last* of the pur-

* One is aware of the attempt made by moderns to neutralise the testimony of this passage to the divinity of the Lord, an attempt as yet unsuccessful, and, one believes, incapable of success. He who declares of Himself that He is "Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" (Rev. xxii. 13), is indeed, and must be, God over all, blessed for evermore.

pose of God about Israel in the future. Taking these up in order, we are first called to a study of *God's ways with Israel in the past* (Rom. ix. 1-24).

The Ground of the Jews Untenable.—Heaviness and sorrow of heart Paul experienced as he surveyed the mass of his unbelieving countrymen, who, priding themselves on their national position, opposed to their utmost the teaching of grace. Was that opposition, persistent as it had been, successful in thwarting the Divine purpose of grace to some amongst Israel? No. The Gospel was not a failure amongst Israel. Some had believed. Now this was in perfect harmony with that which none could gainsay, *viz.*, that "they are not all Israel, which are of Israel" (6). Here was an important point, which the Jews entirely overlooked. Israelites unquestionably the Jews were by natural descent. Did they, taking their stand upon that, thereby claim the blessings of the kingdom? They had read the Hebrew Scriptures to little profit then. The Word of God supplied ample instruction in refutation of such expectations. To stand upon such ground was futile. They might do that, and yet be not numbered among God's faithful people. The Psalms (1. 16-22), the prophets (Isa. 1xv. 11-15; Ezek. xx. 28), refute the supposition that natural descent of itself ensures a participation in the final blessings of God's people.

Again, would they remind the apostle that they were Abraham's seed? Perfectly true. But all Abraham's seed were not reckoned as children to that patriarch, else Ishmaelites must be admitted to be on common ground with the Jews. Would any reply, that all knew that in Isaac was the seed to be called? Well, but what did that really mean: was that simply a statement? or was there teaching underneath it? The apostle interprets that part of their history, and applies it to the matter in hand. "They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God." Ready enough was the Jew to adduce that as a bar to any claim the Ishmaelites might have advanced, unconscious, evidently, till the apostle pointed it out, that what had been stated, and to which the Jew gladly subscribed, might have a wider, and to him a closer application, dealing too, as it did, a death-blow to any expectation of Divine blessing

simply on the ground of natural descent. "For," adds the apostle, "the children of the promise are counted for the seed." Unstable ground indeed were the opponents of the Gospel attempting to build upon. They might, as the Lord had told them (John viii. 37, 39) be Abraham's seed, and yet not be Abraham's children. How interesting to us, and to all God's saints, to study Old Testament history in the light of New Testament teaching.

The Subject Carried Further.—If the claim of natural descent would not avail, might they justly quarrel with the doctrine of *election*? Again the apostle reverts to their history. Had not Rebecca twins? Did not God, ere the children were born, choose Jacob their father, who was the younger brother? Their privileged position as a nation rested upon the exercise of God's choice. Would they, could they question God's right to choose whom He would? Then they must admit the children of Esau to privileges equally with themselves. How foolish, how short-sighted they were! On the other hand what lessons had lain hid in the Old Testament, till the Spirit of God in Gospel times was pleased to discover them! Little, surely, had they understood to what they were opening the door by pressing their right to blessing on the ground of natural descent. Ishmaelites, and Edomites might on that score set up a claim likewise.

Is there Unrighteousness with God?—But Divine election at once introduces the subject of God's *sovereignty*. He chooses whom He will. Is God unrighteous then, in acting thus? Far be the thought. Now there had been a day when the nation might deservedly have been cut off, had not that prerogative been called into exercise on their behalf. "He saith to Moses (Exod. xxxiii. 19), I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy" (Rom. ix. 15, 16). But here a warning note is struck. God's sovereignty is like a two-edged weapon. It may be displayed in showing mercy. It may also be displayed in executing judgment. It was in their case, when guilty

of the sin of the golden calf, displayed in the exercise of mercy. It was in Pharaoh's case displayed in hardening that monarch. "Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth" (18).

Another Objection Met.—Now since it was unquestionable that God's sovereignty had been exercised in their favour in the past, and their preservation from Divine judgment as a nation had resulted from it, how could they, with any show of consistency, call in question God's right to show, if He pleases, favour to Gentiles? But some might seek to evade this, by attempting to make the exercise of God's sovereignty in hardening whom He will an excuse for unbelief. "Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth He yet find fault? for who hath resisted His will? Nay but, O man," is the rejoinder, "who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour?" (19-21). The potter's right is unquestionable. Shall the creature claim for man the exercise of such a right, and deny it to God? What inconsistency! What folly! But worse. The potter's art is only for earth, and his power is over things inanimate. God on the other hand works for eternity; and immortal creatures are as the plastic clay in His hands, to do with them as He pleases. What then man may do with clay the Creator may certainly do with His creatures.

A Needful Caution.—God's sovereign rights no creature in his senses can dispute. Care, however, is needed in stating truth, and we do well to learn from the Word the proper way of presenting it. "What," writes the apostle, "if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom He hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles" (22-24). Vessels of mercy then there are, and vessels of wrath. No Jew could dispute that without denying the Scriptures of truth. Of the former, we are

told, God afore prepared them unto glory. Of the latter, it is stated that they are fitted to destruction. Both furnish opportunities to make God known. By the former, it is the riches of His glory which are displayed. By the latter, it is His power and wrath. God afore prepared vessels of mercy for glory. Who can dispute His right to do this? If God endured with much longsuffering vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, who can question His justice, after such endurance, in showing His wrath, and making known His power in judgment? These vessels are said, be it observed, to be fitted to destruction. But it is not said God so fitted them. Men, by their ways, as Esau and Pharaoh did, show themselves to be deserving of their doom, and will fully justify Divine judicial dealing with them.

Dumb, then, because effectually silenced must the Jew be before this unfolding of the true teaching gathered from the nation's past history. How interesting to any subject mind must all this have been. Principles of God's dealings, illustrated by the Gospel, are seen to be the very principles by the application of which Israel were brought into their privileged position in the past. Divine blessing need not, and did not, run in the order of nature. *Calling, election,* Divine *sovereignty*, each were exemplified in that people's ancient history, and on their behalf. Who shall gainsay God's right to act on those principles in the present? Least of all could the Jew. Now, this admitted, all objection must be removed to God's dealing in grace with Gentiles, and such dealings were predicted in the Old Testament. To this attention must now be directed, by a reference to the Divine Word *concerning Israel and Gentiles* (ix. 25-x. 21).

To the Law and to the Testimony.—Strange was it to the Jew that free grace should be preached to the Gentiles. Nothing, as the apostle's history was abundantly illustrated, so aroused their enmity. "Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved," was part of Paul's indictment against his countrymen (1 Thess. ii. 16). But to the law and to the testimony! What light can God's Word throw on that which He is still, and was then doing? In this case, it is not as the light of a dim, flickering taper, which can do little more than make one

conscious of the surrounding darkness, for the Word is like a clear, bright, steady and unquenchable light, which can penetrate the gloom, and irradiate all around. God had spoken about Gentiles. He had also spoken about Israel. To the prophetic Scriptures are we then turned. Instructive is this to us, and doubly so. For, first, God's purpose to bless Gentiles is put beyond a doubt. Centuries before this salvation was preached to them, the Divine purpose to bless such was revealed, an indication about the same time being also given of what the apostle has said, incapable of being denied by the Jews, that "they are not all Israel which are of Israel." Secondly, we have an instance of that, which is not confined to this place, or to this epistle, *viz.*, the Holy Ghost elucidating the meaning of His own Scriptures.

Two Witnesses.—Both Hosea and Isaiah are to give their testimony. Contemporaries in the prophetic service, the mission of the former was chiefly to the ten tribes, that of the latter being to Judah and Jerusalem. Hosea, who began his ministry when the house of Jehu, in the person of his great grandson, Jeroboam II., was still on the throne of Israel, is first made to speak; and that in attestation of the Divine purpose to call from Jews and also from Gentiles. To two places in his book are we referred: first to the *second* chapter and the twenty-third verse, then to the *first* chapter and tenth verse. There is marked discrimination in this. Of course that must be the case. But it is well for us to observe it. Paul has spoken of Jews, and so quotes the prophet as referring to them, "I will call them My people, which were not My people; and her beloved, which was not beloved." To this passage Peter (1 Pet. ii. 10) evidently likewise refers, applying it to believers from among that same nation. Our apostle spoke also of Gentiles, of whom Peter did not, and quotes from the Hebrew prophet accordingly, "And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not My people, there shall they be called sons of the living God."* Here, then, in the same prophet was a proof of that

* The quotations here are, as *a rule*, not taken directly from the Hebrew, nor from the Greek Version called the Septuagint; but they express the sense of them in more or less verbal conformity to the one or the other. In that quotation from Hos. ii. 23, the clauses are

which so offended Paul's countrymen. Hosea, who predicted future blessing for the Jews, embraced within the range of his subject the blessing of Gentiles also, using the term *sons*, by which they could be designated. In harmony with this, the same apostle laboured for the everlasting welfare of both wherever he went, first seeking out his countrymen, and then turning to evangelize the Gentiles. In proof of this the reader is reminded of his labours at Antioch, Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome, as related by the historian St. Luke.

God's purpose to bless both established from the prophet Hosea, God's foreknowledge of the fortunes of Israel, that only a remnant should be saved, is established from the prophet Isaiah. The prediction of this fact is found in the tenth chapter of that prophet, and the grace, which preserves that remnant, in the first chapter of that book. "Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children (rather, sons) of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved; for" (following the better reading) "the Lord will execute His word on the earth, finishing it and cutting it short. And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha."

What has Happened.—The saving of only a remnant of the Jews, in consequence of the nation's opposition to the Gospel, was but in harmony with the prophetic Word, the Hebrew Scriptures thus furnishing a clue to the state of things manifested in the apostle's day. Sad for Israel that it should have been so; though helpful to an observer of the times to find from the Word that it was no surprise to God. Helpful too should this last thought be to God's saints in our day. Much that surprises them may take place. To God it is all foreknown. So resuming our quotations from the epistle, we read, "Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith; but Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness,

transposed. In that from Isa. xxviii. 16, at the end of our chapter the apostle has blended the announcement to the scorners in Isa. xxviii. with that to the people in viii. 14, who refused the waters of Shiloah.

have not attained to the law.* Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by works. They stumbled at that stumbling-stone: as it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling-stone and rock of offence: and he that (not, whosoever) believeth on Him shall not be ashamed" (30-33). Israel were without excuse. They sought for righteousness where it could not be found.

Israel's Mistake.—Israel sought for righteousness is the testimony of the apostle, whose heart's desire and prayer to God was for them that they might be saved. Wholly wrong were they in the way that they sought for it, as the prayer for their salvation indicated. Who wants salvation from the wrath to come, who can commend himself to God by his own righteousness? The apostle's view, then, of their condition, and the way to have it met, was wholly at variance with the light in which they regarded the matter. Both were in earnest—the apostle for them, and they for themselves. He prayed for them. They went about to establish their own righteousness. Zeal for God they certainly had, but not according to knowledge. Earnestness of purpose, too, characterised them. Busily engaged they were in attempting to establish their own righteousness. Here, then, an important question for them and for us was openly raised, and, as we see, definitely settled. Will zeal for God in itself commend any sinful creature to Him? Will earnestness of purpose be sufficient to draw down on the individual the approbation of Heaven? Earnestness without subjection to God's Word will not help those to whom that Word has come. Zeal without knowledge!† That characterised the Jew. How was it shown? Let the apostle speak. For who was more qualified to treat of this than one whose former state those words fitly described? "They being ignorant of God's righteous-

* The second "of righteousness" should be omitted in v. 31, and the words "of the law" in v. 32.

† "Not according to knowledge." There is a shade of meaning conveyed by the word *epignosis*, translated "knowledge," which to the reader of the English is lost. Knowledge of God, *gnosis*, the Jews had, but full or right knowledge, *epignosis*, flowing from Christian revelation, they had not.

ness, and going about to establish their own (righteousness here is generally omitted), have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God?" (x. 3). Self was at the bottom, combined with ignorance of man's ruin by the fall. Hence they did not submit themselves unto the righteousness of God. They would not let God show His righteousness in justifying such ungodly creatures. They were not willing to be illustrations in display of that righteousness.

The Argument Clinched.—Now it was no question of Paul's opinion, or of that of his opponents. The matter was definitely settled by the coming and vicarious death of the Lord Jesus Christ. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (4), words which might well be written in letters of gold, words which should be deeply graven on every heart. Christ, the anointed one, made such as risen and ascended, is the end of the law for righteousness. Could men have acquired righteousness by law-keeping, why should Christ have died? There is a force, a suitability in the term *Christ* here, because, as we have remarked, it speaks of Him as risen and ascended. As such He was made Lord and Christ (Acts ii. 36). We cannot speak of Him as Christ to us without acknowledging His death on the cross.

It is He who has died, who is risen, and also ascended, who is the end of the law for righteousness. Why did He die for us if righteousness by law-keeping could have been acquired by us, or vicariously for us? Such teaching really, though to many unwittingly, subverts the cardinal doctrine of atonement: His resurrection and ascension tell us that God is fully satisfied with His sacrifice on behalf of those who believe on Him. Nothing more is needed, for God raised Him from the dead. Nothing, too, could be added to perfect the results of His atoning sacrifice, who is now ascended to God's right hand. He is, therefore, the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, for such are justified by faith, righteousness being now imputed to them. He is the end of it for righteousness, not its vicarious fulfiller for that object: that is to say, by His death, resurrection, and ascension it is manifested and

settled, and never to be reversed for us, that righteousness does not come by law. For if it did, then, as we read in Galatians, "Christ died in vain" (Gal. ii. 21). And this is true for every one who believes. What, then, is needed, and in this Israel failed, is to submit one's self to the righteousness of God, that is to say, to allow God to show His righteousness in justifying on the principle of faith those who have sinned.

The teaching as to the righteousness of God in this epistle is now completed. In chap. i. 17 we read that it was revealed in the Gospel. In chap. iii. 21 we learnt that apart from law it was manifested. Here we are taught (x. 3) it is to be submitted to for salvation.

The Testimony of Moses.—In proof of his teaching the apostle summons a witness, who is none other than the mediator of the first covenant, by whom the law was made known to Israel. Now if Moses can be adduced in support of apostolic teaching on this matter, the weapon his opponents sought to wield against him would be turned against themselves. Two doctrines there are, the one the opposite of the other, *viz.*, obtaining righteousness which is of the law, and righteousness which is of faith. Of both the great lawgiver had spoken, though doubtless his professed adherents in Paul's day were ignorant of the application of his language. To his writings then Paul turns, and there finds all that is required. "Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.* But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead). But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thine heart; that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto right-

* "By it" is the better reading, and applies to righteousness, *i.e.*, shall live by that righteousness. The reference is to Levit. xviii. 5.

eousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Very interesting is it to see the way the apostle applies the words of the lawgiver in Deut. xxx. 11-14. In that portion of the book, xxx. 1-14, Moses is speaking of Israel's restoration after failure, their hearts turning to obey God in the land of their captivity, the prelude to their final return to their own country. For that the Divine word is to be hearkened to and obeyed. How, then, is the question, can those, formerly put under law by God, receive blessing after failing to keep it? Righteousness that is of the law they have not, and cannot in that case procure. What resource, then, is there? None but the righteousness which is of faith, to be obtained by hearkening to God's Word, and doing what it enjoins. Now this was just the principle of the Gospel. Failure to keep the law on Israel's part was but too manifest. Their condition at home and abroad witnessed to that. What did Moses sketch out as the way of blessing for such, but in principle what God was calling them to by the Gospel? Moses, then, if rightly studied, would teach them both the untenableness of their contention, and the real resource for them all in the acknowledged day of failure. Who but one taught by the Spirit could have thus handled the Word, and have opened up teaching from it so pertinent, so conclusive? Salvation was nigh at hand to every one who believed. Deut. xxx. 10 spoke of hearkening unto the voice of the Lord, to keep His commandments, and statutes, and judgments. Their doing that must lead them to hearken to the prophet of Deut. xviii. 15, 18, who is the one Paul preached (Acts ix. 20) as Jesus (so we there should read) the Son of God. Salvation would then be the result.

The provision in the law to which attention has been called is really for a coming day, though the principle contained in it could be, and can be applied in Christian times. And this is now declared. "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith, which we preach: that if thout shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead,

thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. x. 8-10). For faith must be real, and the open confession must be genuine, having its seat in the heart. Where faith is real that open confession will not be withheld. "For the Scripture saith (see Isa. xxviii 16), Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed" (11). Now this clearly opens the door for Gentiles; "for there is," adds the apostle, "no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him." A bold, outspoken statement, certainly. Would any contest it? The unerring Word of God is the apostle's authority for the announcement. "For whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." So wrote Joel, the most ancient, Jonah perhaps excepted, of the company of the minor prophets.

How Faith Comes.—If these things be so, as the prophets Isaiah and Joel declare, of those who call, and those who believe, the question naturally arises, "How shall they call (as Joel had predicted) on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him (of which Isaiah had written) of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher, and how shall they preach, except they be sent?" (14, 15). The prophetic declarations above referred to suppose, and require a testimony first to go forth; for calling *on** is not just the same as calling *to*. It means the open confession of Him as God, on whom they call, and who is to be worshipped. How can there be that without a revelation, a testimony first going forth? "As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things?" (15). That testimony was going forth by the Gospel, but all had not obeyed it. No wonder that the prophets had written in the language they had done, "Whosoever," etc., evidently implying that all might not believe; for in truth Israel's unbelief

* In the days of Enos, Seth's son, in the presence of the godless Cainite race, men began to call upon the name of the Lord (Gen. iv. 26). That, too, characterised Abraham in the midst of the Canaanitish races (Gen. xii. 8; xiii. 4; xxi. 33). A mark of the wicked is, that they call not on Jehovah. Ps. xiv. 4.

had been predicted centuries previous, as Isaiah had written, "Lord, who hath believed our report" (16). How then does faith come? The answer is plain, "Faith cometh by hearing (or, report) and hearing (or, report) by the Word of Christ" (17). For thus it would seem probable the apostle expressed himself, introducing directly the Lord Jesus Christ.

Any Excuse for this Unbelief?—Since faith cometh by hearing, could any excuse their unbelief on the ground that the report had not reached them? Even that loophole of escape was cut off. The Gospel was in all the world, and was preached in the whole creation (not to every creature) under heaven (Colos. i. 6, 23), so that it might be said in the words of the Psalmist (xix. 4). "Their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." Were Israel unaware of God's purpose to minister blessing to Gentiles? Did the free proclamation of the Gospel take them unawares? The law and the prophets had given indications of this activity of Divine grace. Moses had written, "I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you (Deut. xxxii. 21). But Esaias (lxv. 1, 2), is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought Me not, I was made manifest unto them that asked not after Me. But to Israel He saith, All day long I have stretched forth My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people" (Rom. x. 19-21). What an opening up of the Word has been made! All ground of objection on the Jew's part against the Gospel completely cut away from under their feet by the combined testimony of Moses and the prophets. Their objections were found to be untenable. Their ignorance of what was in the Hebrew Scriptures was set forth in the light of day.

XIII.

God's Purpose about Israel in the Future.

Chapter XI.

TWO questions now present themselves, and important ones in regard to Israel. Has God cast away His people? And, have they stumbled that they should fall? These questions can be fully answered so as to leave no one in doubt about them for one moment.

God has not Cast Away His People.—As it regards the first of these questions, he who dictated this epistle to his amanuensis, Tertius, was a proof to the contrary. Apostle to the Gentiles though he was, he was nevertheless an Israelite of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. To that little tribe he belonged, which cast in its lot with Judah, and owned the king who reigned at Jerusalem on the throne set up by God. In perfect keeping with that which has been affirmed, *viz.*, that God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew, we are turned to the history of Elijah the Tishbite, and to God's communication to him at Horeb. The kingdom of Israel, under Ahab, had sunk into awful apostasy. Dark indeed, spiritually, was that hour of the nation's history, yet God had reserved to Himself, unknown to the prophet, seven thousand men who had not bowed the knee to Baal. The mass were in apostasy. A little company, comparatively, was all that remained true to God. "Even so," says the apostle, "at this present time also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace"* (xi. 5, 6). God's people, whom He foreknew, He had kept in Ahab's day. His people, whom He foreknew, He was keeping in the apostle's day, and keeps such still. Now the history of Elijah was well known. No Jew could gainsay it. No one had risen up in that day to dispute its authenticity. Telling

* The latter half of this verse (6), "But if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work," it is generally agreed should be omitted.

then was the reference to it. Had his countrymen no perception of it? Would they elect to go with the mass, the crowd? How often since Paul's day have men done that, making shipwreck concerning the faith! In the prophet's day it was the few who were faithful, as every Jew acknowledged. Then too, the ruling power was persecuting the saints. So was it in Paul's day. The popular current in Elijah's day was not that of which God approved. Those who sought honour from men were not found in the faithful company which He had reserved for Himself. Had this no voice for them who would listen to it? A remnant there was of faithful ones. To that Paul belonged— a remnant according to the election of grace.

The nation than had not obtained what it sought for. God's blessing dispensed through the Gospel was not bestowed on the principle of works, but of grace. They had not perceived that, being now judicially blinded. Of this sad condition the lawgiver had spoken (Deut. xxix. 4). The possibility of such a state was then long ago declared, and the royal Psalmist, the apostle now reminds the Christians in Rome had invoked such dealing on the part of God with those who persecuted the righteous (Rom. xi. 9, 10). Now this reference to the sixty-ninth Psalm was especially important, because David therein predicted the persecution by men of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, which had openly come to pass. Yet not of Him only but of others as well, as David wrote, "They persecute Him whom Thou hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom Thou hast wounded" (Ps. lxix 26). What an opening of the eye this Psalm afforded to any who studied it in Paul's day aright! What a clue to past, and to then present events!

Why They have Stumbled.—The second question must now be answered, "Have they stumbled that they should fall?" (Rom. xi. 11). Stumbled they have at the stumblingstone, the stone laid in Zion. Was it for their everlasting perdition? for in this sense "to fall" seems here used. Their perdition, we learn, is not God's purpose, but rather the blessing of Gentiles, in order to provoke them to jealousy (11). It is but for a time, that Israel is cast off. "Now, if the fall of them be the

riches of the world, and the diminishing of them (rather, their loss) the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness ?" (12). "If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead ? For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches" (15, 16). The nation will be saved, and as a nation. Meantime Gentiles, as such, have the opportunity of sharing in the outward privileges of God's people. We say *outward*, because as v. 22 teaches us, the present participaters in them, if they continue not in God's goodness, will be cut off.

Address to the Gentiles.—The possibility just stated necessarily calls for a warning to those who are in danger of such an end. So as the apostle of the Gentiles he now addresses directly those who were admittedly within his sphere of service, professors, not heathen idolators. Great was their privilege. Great was their responsibility. The apostle shall now speak in his own words. He presses, it will be seen, the responsibility of the individual. Each would have to answer in this for himself. "If some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, were graffed in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, Branches were broken off, that I might be graffed in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, neither will He spare thee" (for so we should probably read the clause). "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee God's* goodness, if thou continue in His goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be graffed in: for God is able to graff them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert graffed contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be graffed into their own olive tree ?" (17-24).

We have quoted the passage at length, that the reader

* So it is generally now read.

may have before him what the apostle wrote, so important both as conveying instruction, and also as a needed warning to Gentiles. Alas, what is man! Privileges however great are in danger of being slighted and misused. Now what is the root of the olive tree? To whom does it refer? The root of the olive tree is that from which the branches receive nourishment. To whom does it refer? We shall easily arrive at a clear and satisfactory conclusion, if we notice what is said of the branches. On the one hand some, not all of the branches, have remained, and do remain in connection with the root. Naturally they were part of the tree. On the other hand, some of the natural branches have been broken off, severed from the tree; yet if God pleased to do it, they could be graffed into their own olive tree. In the meantime, something else has taken place, *viz.*, a wild olive tree has been graffed in among the natural branches, so as, with those which have always remained in connection with the stem, to partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree.

Is it Christ or Abraham?—What, then, is this root? Is it Christ? How could that be? None were naturally in connection with Him. He Himself has declared, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and die, *it abideth alone*" (John xii. 24). Again, if any are cut off, who seemed outwardly to have been in connection with Christ, and of this he speaks in John xv. 6, there is no hint, no supposition of such being graffed in again. On the contrary, it is stated that nothing but final perdition awaits such. Christ, then, is not the root of the olive tree. He is the Vine. Can it be Abraham? Now there are those referred to by the apostle as *naturally* belonging to the olive tree (17, 24), contrasted with Gentiles described as the wild olive tree. Of the former it is stated that the good tree is their own, with which Gentiles once had no connection. What, then, can the root be but Abraham, to whom the promises were made (Gal. iii. 16), and with whom Israel was naturally connected, being his seed after the flesh? With him, the father of the faithful, some of Israel had all along continued in connection; whilst others, because of their unbelief, to use the simile of the branches of a tree, have been broken off. Into connection with him, as the root of

the promises, Gentiles, who are *professedly* Christian, have been brought. *Now that profession must be made good*, else, what has happened to some of the natural branches will happen to grafts from the wild olive tree. "For if God spared not the natural branches, neither will He spare thee. Behold then the goodness and severity of God; on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, God's goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off" (21, 22). How pointed and personal is the statement. "Toward *thee*." "If *thou* continue." "*Thou* shalt be cut off." Now to Gentiles, if cut off, be it remembered, no restoration is promised. For Israel there is a hope held out on the condition therewith stated.

Israel's Salvation.—To this the apostle now turns the attention of his readers, acquainting them with the mystery of God's ways with His ancient people, affecting directly Gentiles. "Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written (Isa. lix. 20-21). There shall come forth out of Sion the Deliverer, and (or, He) shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins" (Rom. xi. 25-27). Would Gentiles seek to be wise in their own conceits as to this matter? To prevent that, God here announces the reason of His dealings. Desirous to bless Gentiles, this blindness, or hardening, in part of Israel has been permitted. "As concerning the Gospel," Paul adds, "they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (28, 29). Of the gifts we have read (Rom. ix. 4, 5), and of the calling also in that same chapter (v. 7). And now the secret comes fully out. The blessing of sinful creatures, as God desires to bless, can only be effected through the exercise of sovereign mercy. Gentiles who did not believe have now obtained mercy through Israel's unbelief. "So have these also," writes the apostle of unbelieving Jews, "now not believed, that through your mercy* (*i.e.*, that shown to Gentiles) they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief,

* As the Revised Version here agrees with the Authorised Version in connecting "your mercy" with what follows, I have left it

that He might have mercy upon all" (31, 32). It must be remembered, if we would understand this, that God's purposes and promises to Israel concerned them nationally. Hence the final impenitence of some hinders not the blessing of the nation in the future, when the godly remnant becomes its sole representative upon earth. With Israel's future blessing, that of men upon earth, in a manner never yet known, is inseparably bound up. Well, then, may the apostle ask, "What shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" (15).

A Burst of Praise.—God's gracious purposes as regards Israel will surely be fulfilled. What has happened, in the meantime, was foreknown and foretold. Why it has been allowed, once a mystery and not the subject of prophecy in the past, forms part of New Testament revelation. "That He might have mercy upon all." Hence blessing can be bestowed, measured, not by the nation's deserts, but by God's willingness to bless. Contemplating this, the apostle's heart was filled to overflowing, and found relief in expressing himself, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" (33). Much of the Old Testament has necessarily been quoted in support of that which the apostle has been teaching. From the prophet Isaiah alone he has quoted about ten times in these three chapters. With his thoughts guided of the Spirit, still running in the vein of that Evangelical prophet, he adopts Isaiah's language, as given in the Septuagint, and asks with boldness, "Who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His councillor? or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed to him again?" (See Isa. xl. 13, 14, according to the *Codex Alexandrinus*.) Such questions may well be asked. "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things; to whom (or rather, to Him) be the glory for ever. Amen" (34-36). How small man appears! God works for His own glory. "To Him are all things." How rich is His mercy. How wonderful are His ways, that wretched

so in the text. But others connect those words with the preceding verb *viz.*, "these have now not believed in your mercy (*i.e.*, mercy shown to you) that they also may obtain mercy." One inclines to this looking at the passage, though Meyer and Alford object to it.

creatures like us should share in that mercy!

"O God! We acknowledge
The depth of Thy riches;
For of Thee and through Thee,
And to Thee are all things:
How rich is Thy mercy!
How great Thy salvation!
We bless Thee, we praise Thee,
Amen, and amen."—*Bowly.*

XIV.

Exhortations. Chapters XII-XV. 13.

COMING to exhortations after the unfolding of the Gospel which we have had, we are reminded by the place they occupy in the epistle of the great difference between law and grace. Under both exhortations are needed, for men are sinful creatures. Under the former, they come in as incentives to work for blessings to be obtained on obedience. Under the latter, they come in to remind us of that which should characterise those who share in salvation by the blood of Christ. Under the law, it was working to get. Under grace, it is working because we have received. Now grace received was never meant to foster a spirit of carelessness in walk or behaviour. The one, who would plead it as an excuse for that, has not understood what it is that becomes him as redeemed by the blood of Christ. He who is only acted upon by fear of the consequences has known nothing of the constraining power of Divine love.

The Appeal.—One sees the wisdom of God in selecting as the chief exponent of Divine grace a man who had been exceeding zealous for Judaism. Paul knew what it was to attempt to commend himself to God by keeping the law, and what it was to prove the constraining power of the mercy of God. Hence from him, directed by the Spirit, the exhortation comes most fittingly, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world (or, age), but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God" (xii. 1, 2). He had spoken of God's purpose to have mercy upon all (xi. 32). He has told his readers that all flowed out spontaneously, not drawn forth by any desert of the creature. "Of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things." He now bases the appeal to the saints on the mercies shown by God as brought out in the

Gospel. Sovereign as God is in the dispensing of mercy at all, of which we have been already reminded in ix. 15, we learn from Exod. xxxiii. 19, quoted in that place, that in a twofold way it is displayed. It is shown in His being gracious. It is also shown in His being compassionate. It is on that aspect of it which especially refers to the Divine compassion that the apostle here dwells. The Father of mercies, or rather compassions, Paul called him (2 Cor. i. 3) as he looked back on his deliverance at Ephesus, when he had despaired even of life. The compassions of God he might then well write of, as he took a survey of the full and wonderful deliverance for the guiltiest of mankind, effected, as he delighted to set forth, through the Gospel. Now this is what he does, and in this sense is the reader here to understand the word *mercies*. In what a character does God present Himself! omnipotent yet compassionate. And that, as manifested in the Gospel, is to act on the saints.

Compassion.—But this must be elucidated a little. God can be compassionate we here learn, and in ix. 15 have seen that He is sovereign in that: "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will *have compassion* on whom I will have compassion." These were His words, as the apostle has given them to us, addressed to Moses in Exod. xxxiii. 19 after the people had made the golden calf. He would have mercy (or, be gracious) to whom He would be gracious, and *have compassion* on whom He would. This, then, did not depend on the people's deserts. It was part of the Divine prerogative. God, because He is God, can act as He will. Now the time chosen by Him for the revelation of this should be marked by the reader. It was when all was lost, as far as Israel were concerned, and lost by their sin, that God first spoke of these feelings of His heart, *compassions*, which could be displayed towards objects who had shown themselves deserving only of judgment. And in perfect accord with this, in the revelation of His name to Moses in Exod. xxxiv. 6, when God proclaimed Himself as the Lord, the Lord God, merciful (or compassionate),* the *first* statement of His character, and that

* The word for merciful in Exod. xxxiv. comes from the same root as that translated in Romans "I will have compassion."

in the closest connection with the assertion of His Godhead as the self-existing and the powerful One, was that of the *compassionate* One. What an association of thought! God the compassionate One! The self-existing One compassionate to those who have sinned against Him! Yes, it is true, and it can be used as an appeal to such creatures.

Now the reasonableness of such an appeal all must admit, but the making it tells a tale. It speaks surely of our need of it, gently reminding us of the possibility of shortcoming in responding to the Divine goodness. Possibility only shall we say? Probability, shall we rather speak of? Something more definite than that must be stated, if the truth is to be expressed. Will not each true believer confess that he has poorly responded to that Divine compassion, which has flowed out in a depth and in a manner we could never have expected?

A Living Sacrifice.—Now what should be the response? "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Salvation for those who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ is a settled matter. If we speak, then, of soul salvation it is effected already, and nothing can alter it. We have received it (1 Pet. i. 9). If we speak of final salvation for our persons, it is assured us. It is ready to be revealed in the last time (1 Pet. i. 5). Not then to get salvation are we to present our bodies a living sacrifice, but because we are subjects of saving grace already. A living sacrifice! Our bodies to be thus presented to God as acceptable or well-pleasing, for the death of that sacrifice, on the ground of which we are accepted, has taken place. Now no one better than Paul could thus exhort the saints, for he could say, "To me to live is Christ" (Phil. i. 21). Antinomianism finds no place in the Gospel which he preached. He who shares in the benefits of the atoning sacrifice of Christ should own that he is not his own, having been bought with a price (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20), to live to Him who died for him and rose again (2 Cor. v. 15). The creature, as a saint, is thus by the Gospel turned to his proper object of service. In living to Christ he will live to God. But we live in a world, an age where things are out of course,

things in heaven and things on earth being not yet reconciled to God (Col. i. 20). Hence the need of the accompanying admonition, "Be not conformed to this world (or, age), but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that (or, the) good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God" (2). For by having the mind renewed, of which we also read in Eph. iv. 23, transformation can take place, so that the saint, instead of being conformed to this age, may prove what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. Thus intelligent service might be rendered, and willing service too, by those who had as Gentiles formerly walked in the vanity of their mind (Eph. iv. 17). For this, as regards the Colossian saints, Epaphras, we learn, laboured fervently in prayers (Col. iv. 12).

The World.—A word on the world just mentioned may not be out of place. There are two words in the Greek translated by *world*. The one, *cosmos*, speaks of the scheme or system of things, and hence can be used *morally* of a system of things opposed to God of which He is not the author. Of this John writes (1 John ii., 16), and against it warns us. The other word, *aion*, speaks of duration or age. So we read of the present age, *aion*, in contrast to that which is to come. Here (Rom. xii. 2) the word is *aion*, age, not *cosmos*. By Paul both terms are used (see Eph. ii. 2; 1 Cor. ii. 6). And in the first of these passages they both appear, "according to the course (or, age) of this world, *cosmos*." By John *aion* is never used in the sense of our passage, *i.e.*, of this age, unless in ix. 32 of his Gospel we have a solitary exception. In John the devil is called by the Lord the prince or ruler of this world, *cosmos*, an order of things which is not of the Father. In Cor. iv. 4 Paul writes of him as the god of this age, *aion*. Hence to this age, of which the devil is the god, we are not to be conformed, but transformed, so as to know the perfect will of God.* Into this subject—the will of God, the apostle will now enter somewhat in detail.

Christian Walk and Service.—Resuming the course of our chapter, the subject of Christian walk and service

* Attention is thus drawn to these two words, but without exhausting all the senses in which *cosmos* is used in the N.T.

presents itself, and we learn, incidentally, as it were, though of course designedly on God's part, of various positions in which a saint may be found, and of services in which he may be called to take part. We say *incidentally* because the apostle touches on services and positions in life with which his readers were already acquainted, but does it in such a way as to throw light for us on Christian life and duties in apostolic days, in connection with the assembly, and with social and daily life as members of society. On each of these does he touch, and in the order just noted. He has spoken of the perfect will of God—implying the complete, the full unfolding of that will for us. That leads on first of all to injunctions suited for saints in the *assembly of God*.

The Body of Christ.—The Christian not yet freed from the presence of indwelling sin, though taught in chap. vi. how to deal with it as being himself in Christ, needs the warning here given, "not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God has dealt to every man the (or, a) measure of faith." What creatures God's saints must be, that such a caution should be administered, accompanied as it is by a reason explanatory of the suitability of it! "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one Body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (4, 5). Here the truth of the Body, called elsewhere the Body of Christ (1 Cor. xii.; Eph. i.; Col. i.), is just touched upon, not to unfold full teaching about it, but to remind all of it as an incentive to the maintenance of unity amongst them. For the reader may remark, that it is of the *members* only the apostle writes, not of the *Head*. Union with the Head is not his subject, but the relation of saints in the Body one to another—members one of another. Of all on earth in Christ it was and is true that they are members of the Body of Christ, though this membership is not contingent on being in Christ, for both—membership of the Body of Christ, and being in Christ—flow from the gift of the Holy Ghost. If, then, we are members one of another, since all the members have not the same office, there will be diversity in service, but combined with the

spirit of unity. Hence self-seeking and self-exaltation will be discountenanced; and serving for the common good, labouring for others, and caring for others, these features of true Christian service will be displayed in the company, as indeed seems to have been the case in Rome (xvi.).

Service in the Assembly.—On Church, or assembly associations and service the apostle now touches, and that briefly, though sufficient for the matter in hand, having elsewhere (1 Cor. xii.-xiv.) already enlarged at some length on this line of teaching. "Having, then, gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering" (6, 7). Gifts, *charismata*, there were fitting each one for his service, but all flowing, as 1 Cor. xii. 4 shows, from the Holy Ghost. For whilst the ascended Christ and Lord gives gifts, *domata*, to men, which are the instruments, the living agents for the work, the Holy Spirit by a gift, *charisma*, fits each one for his service. It is of this last that the apostle writes in Romans xii. 6, and, viewing the different kinds of assembly service, they can be divided into two classes, *viz.*, ministry in the Word, and ministry in other ways. To these two it seems the apostle now refers under the heads of prophesying ministering, before speaking directly of the persons engaged in either the one or the other branch of assembly service. To each due attention was to be given. Now prophesying is a comprehensive term (see 1 Cor. xiv. 3), and though all teaching need not necessarily be prophesying, yet prophesying has in it an element of teaching, presenting, as it does, the truth set forth as the message of God for those to whom it is addressed. The normal idea of a prophet seems to be, one who has and can utter the mind of God, whether in foretelling the future, or having understanding of what is needed in the present. So Abraham is called a prophet by God, and is the first person so styled in the Old Testament (Gen. xx. 7), though we never read of his foretelling the future. But, having the mind of God, he could pray to God on behalf of Abimelech, king of Gerar. Similarly Aaron was to be the prophet of Moses, to utter for him to

Pharaoh (Exod. vii. 1). Now prophesying was to be according to the proportion of faith. A needful caution that the individual should not overstep that which God had given to him, which never would, if rightly handled, distort or unduly magnify any part of Divine revelation. If such a caution was needed then, is it not likewise needed now?

Coming to the individuals, teachers and exhorters are mentioned. A prophet did exhort (1 Cor. xiv. 3). Distinctness of service in the ministry of the Word is here recognised and enjoined, not apparently as correcting some wrong practice in Rome, or introducing anything new, but as enforcing that with which they were previously acquainted. We see, then, that in apostolic days a man was not necessarily endowed with a gift, *charisma*, both for teaching and for exhorting. Room was to be given for the exercise of each gift, and each one was to keep to that service with which he had been entrusted by God. Well would it have been had this been constantly remembered and acted upon. As to other kinds of ministry, individuals are here also recognised, the instrument for service being mentioned, and not merely the character of service being described. "He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity (or, liberality); he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness." The spirit in which these different services should be performed is noted. Simplicity in giving, diligence in ruling, cheerfulness in showing mercy. Ruling is mentioned. To what does it refer? To ruling at home, or in the assembly? Which? Both are mentioned in the New Testament. 1 Tim. iii. 4, 5, 12 treats of the former, 1 Thess. v. 12; 1 Tim. v. 17 of the latter. We believe the latter is referred to, though some have negatived such a thought. To refer it to a man ruling his own house seems unsuitable, coming in, as it undeniably does, connected with services rendered outside the household. And since all who ruled in the assembly did not necessarily labour in the Word, as 1 Tim. v. 17 informs us, the mention of any engaged in ruling or presiding in the assembly may fitly find a place in connection with labourers in the Word, whilst at the same time being plainly distinguished from teaching or exhorting.

Daily Life.—Turning to daily life (xii. 9-21), we learn of the Christian man's possible surroundings. Intercourse he would of course have with Christians, but with others as well; and he might have to experience, though undeservedly, the malice and enmity of neighbours or acquaintances, the outflow of hearts estranged from God, and venting themselves on His servant. To this he was liable. From it he could not expect to be wholly exempt. "Through *much* tribulation" (or, many tribulations), was the apostolic warning, "we must enter into the Kingdom of God" (Acts xiv. 22). So, he was not to seek for a hermit's cell. An anchorite's life was never intended for a Christian. The Lord's life on earth would teach us that, and these directions by the Spirit through the apostle confirm it. In the world, but not of the world, the Christian would find opportunities for the outflow of spiritual life in healthy activity, such as he might seek for in vain in a cell, and that towards saints, towards men around him, and even towards his enemies, the spring of it all being love, the activity of the Divine nature, which is to be without dissimulation or hypocrisy. Was compromise with evil to characterise him? No. The first injunction forbids that: "Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good" (9). Then beginning with the circle of Christian brotherhood, the members of it were to be kindly or tenderly affectioned one to another. Christian brotherly love, they were reminded by the term used, was of that character known as family affection.* They were brothers and sisters. This leads on to various displays of spiritual life in connection with saints, and the service in which the individual might be engaged, and the spirit in which he was to walk. Then extending the sphere of Christian activity, so as to embrace all men, graciousness and upright dealing he was to cultivate, and kindness was to be shown even to his enemies when needed. Under the law retaliation in righteousness was permitted. In the Gospel love to enemies is enjoined (Matt. v. 38-47). To no man was the Christian to recompense evil for evil.

* "Fondly affectionate" (10). So Meyer, "an expression," he writes, "purposely chosen, because Christians are *brothers* and *sisters*, as the word *philostorgos* is also in classical Greek the usual one for *family affection*."

With all, if possible, he was to be at peace. Avengement of himself was not to be his aim, but to leave that with the Lord.* And watchfulness was to be exercised, not to be overcome of evil, but, on the contrary, to overcome evil with good.

In what varied circumstances, then, may the Christian find himself. For all, however, the Word provides. In them, but not to be overcome by them. So, encouragement is to be fostered as rejoicing in hope, whilst patience is to be cultivated even in tribulation, and the spirit of dependence strengthened by continuing instant in prayer (12). Care and thought for others was to be manifested as circumstances afforded the opportunity (13-15), and that extending even to the feeding and the quenching the thirst of an enemy, the effect of which would be to heap coals of fire upon his head. This reference to Prov. xxv. 21, 22 must have been telling to any wedded to the principles of the law.

Political Relations.—Further, the Christian belongs to, and indeed is an inheritor of a kingdom, which is not of this world. His citizenship, or commonwealth is in heaven (Phil. iii. 20). In what relation, then, does he stand to the civil power on earth? An important question, and one which the Spirit of God has not left unanswered: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves (not, damnation, but) judgment" (xiii. 1, 2). Government upon earth was established by God just after the flood. Earthly rule is God's order, to which those under it are to be subject. The Jews, as we know, were ready to rebel against the Roman yoke. A Christian might, perhaps, have been tempted to question the propriety of subjection to a heathen and idolatrous monarch. Now this was readily settled, and in a way which admitted of no subterfuge or casuistical reason-

* It is a moot question, in what connection is "wrath" (19) here mentioned—the wrath of an enemy, or the wrath of God? Something may be said for both the one and the other, though perhaps the latter is the more common view. Give place to the wrath of God. Let that act, not you.

ing to neutralise the apostolic injunction: for "the powers that be are ordained of God." In resisting the power, the individual would be resisting the ordinance of God. Bringing God into the question would free the Christian man's conscience at once.

The Domain of the Civil Power.—Is, then, blind obedience in everything to the ruling power here inculcated? Has it authority to exercise unlimited sway over the conscience? Within its proper sphere of *civil* rule it is to be obeyed, and to that the apostle clearly points, as he adds, "Rulers are not a terror to the good work (so we should read) but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil" (3, 4). The good and the evil here must clearly be understood of that which is good or evil in God's sight. That will guide as to the domain of civil rule, and the Divine purpose for which such authority has been instituted upon earth.

Were the civil power (how often has it done it?) to dispute God's authority over the conscience, and to command that which He has forbidden, any resisting it would not have praise from it; and if they did obey it in such a case, they would not be doing that which is good. Hence, subjection to it in its own lawful domain is what is here enjoined. If it oversteps the bounds, the answer of Peter to the rulers at Jerusalem will guide the Christian: "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye" (Acts iv. 19). Where man's claims conflict with God's claims, the path, however trying, is clear, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts v. 29). And this important question receives further elucidation. For the same apostle, who so boldy addresses the rulers in the council, wrote by the Spirit to saints scattered abroad, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him" (for civil power can be delegated) "for the punishment of evildoers, and for

the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God" (1 Pet. ii. 13-16). Subjection, then, to the civil power is to be rendered not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake. It is God's ordinance, and rulers are His ministers, and Christians are His servants. How this clears up matters, and would remove any scruples that might present themselves, arising out of the question of the ruler's religious belief. A heathen, an idolatrous monarch or ruler, was to be obeyed in that domain in which, according to God, he had lawful sway. And the Christian doing good would have praise of the same, and be manifesting that he was a servant of God.

Tribute and Custom.—Another question, and one apparently not yet settled for some in our day, presents itself, and is finally dealt with by the apostle. Tribute, custom, fear, honour, each should be cheerfully rendered, where and when due. Taxes, and custom dues are to be paid, and those in authority feared, or reverenced, and honoured. What is *due* is the guiding principle, and the righteous rule. Is not this at times forgotten? How it simplifies matters! What is lawfully due, pay. There the Christian's responsibility ends. Thus the Word could smooth his path, whilst maintaining the authority of God, stimulating him too to subjection in all things lawful to the civil power for conscience' sake. For in paying what was due he was obeying God. This puts conscience really in the right place, and sheds a true light on the duty of a servant of the Most High. A rightly ordered conscience will not refuse the payment of that which is due.

Fulfilling the Law.—The duty of paying what is due having been enforced, we are led on to the reminder of a debt, which can never cease to be owing whilst we continue on earth—love to others. "Owe no man anything, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law" (Rom. xiii. 8). Love to one's neighbour lies at the basis of the commandments of the second table of the decalogue. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (10). To endeavour to be justified by works of law was

hopeless (iii. 20). To attempt to repress the evil within one by keeping it, is to court, and to ensure failure (vii.). Let however true love to others be in real exercise, and the law will be fulfilled. Are the law and the Gospel opposed? They are in the matter of justification. But he who walked in the spirit of the Gospel, displaying the activity of the Divine nature, fulfilled the law. The doctrine here set forth exemplifies the statement of viii. 4.

Day Approaching.—Another motive is now furnished us, arising from the consideration of the time in this world's history. The night is far spent, the long night we can say of now near six millenniums is far spent, and the day is at hand. To sleep, or to act as men act under cover of darkness, does not become the Christian. His salvation is nearer than when he believed. In the prospect of it, in the hope of that final deliverance of his person, *i.e.*, salvation, as here spoken of, let him be up, watchful, and stirring. Let him cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light. Let him walk honestly, or becomingly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying: but, putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, let him not make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof (xiii. 11-14). To whom is all this addressed? To heathen? To unconverted people? No. To saints in Rome, beloved of God. Saints, Christians need such exhortations. May none of us forget that. Would any tell us that their old man is dead and gone, or that they have no sin? One of two conclusions must then be drawn. Either Paul was mistaken in thus exhorting Christians; or the upholders of such thoughts have gone beyond, and do not abide in the doctrine of the Christ (2 John 9). Christianity does not satisfy them. Which conclusion is the correct one, the simplest mind can determine. The doctrine of development is antagonistic to Christianity. For it professes, that it is not satisfied with what has been revealed.

Weak Believers.—But another line of exhortation we learn was needed, arising out of the component parts of the assembly in Rome. Composed, as elsewhere, of some who had been Jews, and of some who had been Gentiles,

the former would have to give up certain things which from their earliest days they had observed, as enjoined upon them by the law of Moses. Some are slower than others in surrendering that which they once had rightly cherished. So we can understand, how it was there were in Rome those not yet prepared to avail themselves of their full Christian freedom. Those who had been Gentiles of course had no such conscientious difficulties. Hence friction might arise, and grave troubles spring up in the assembly. To this question the apostle now addressed himself. All of them were God's servants (xiv. 1-12). No one in such things was to judge his brother (13-23); but to learn of Christ to please his neighbour for his good to edification (xv. 1-7).

God's Servants.—A word there was on this subject both for the strong and for the weak. And the apostle seeks to draw the bond of Christian fellowship between them close and tight, so that, what might have seemed to presage a coming disruption, should be turned to the confirming of love one toward another. "Him," then he writes, "that is weak in the faith receive ye but not to doubtful disputations" (or, for decisions of doubts),* God had once given to Israel regulations about meats, and injunctions about days. Some, evidently conscientiously, were still observing both the one and the other. Of a double evil was there a danger. The strong ones were tempted to despise the weak ones. The weak ones were apt to judge the strong ones. For these questions were not the product of what are commonly claimed to be, though often miscalled, scruples of conscience. They naturally arose out of God's previous revelation, from which, some in Rome, formerly when Jews rightly subject to them, had not yet learnt their deliverance. They were not the fruit of a morbidity of conscience, which judges others according to a standard of the person's own devising apart from any question of Divine revelation. For this last the apostle was not legislating. He was concerned with the maintenance of Christian fellowship, and continuance of brotherly intercourse between those he here calls strong ones, and those he designates as weak ones,

* "Do not let your association of him among you be *with a view to settle these disputes.*"—*Alford.*

this last term showing in what light he, once himself so zealous for the law, regarded those believers who were not yet well grounded in Christian doctrine. The conscientious practice of both parties he fully owns, and their faithfulness to the Lord likewise (6, 7). Now they were all God's servants. Let each then leave the other in these things to his own Master (4). With God each one of us has to do. Before His judgment seat we each must stand, and to Him each one must give account (10-12). Simple, but solemn truths, which all are in danger of forgetting in one way or another. "We forbad him, because he followeth not with us" (Luke ix. 49), was an instance of it. We may be free before God about something, or the contrary. Let each be fully persuaded in his own mind. When it was a question of doctrine subversive of Christianity, or of moral conduct, or of sectarian principles, no one was, or could be more decided and firm than Paul. Where such are not in question, let us not judge another man's servant.

What we should judge.—Would any occupy themselves with judging? Let them judge "this rather that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way." All meats have been sanctified by God for man's use (1 Tim. iv. 4, 5). Nothing was common, *i.e.*, unsanctified, or unclean (Gen. ix. 3). The strong ones were free to use their freedom, but care was to be exercised, lest, whilst doing that, they stumbled the weak (Rom. xiv. 21). For "to him who esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean" (14). What then should the strong amongst them aim at? To walk in love (15). To take care that their good was not evil spoken of. To follow after the fine things which made for peace, and things wherewith they might edify another (19); and having faith have it to themselves (22), not pressing it on the weak one. "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (17). And to stimulate saints thus to act the Word declares, that "he that in these things (or rather, this) serveth Christ, is acceptable (or, well pleasing) to God, and approved of men" (18). In thus acting he would manifest himself to be a true servant of the common Master.

The Exemplar.—Service to the Master here introduced, the example of the Master is fittingly brought in. "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not Himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached Thee fell on Me" (xv. 1-3). To the Psalms (lxix. 9) are we here turned for proper instruction in a matter, which had there not been Christian revelation, would never have arisen. And all occasion for such exhortation will pass away when the Church is caught up, and the Mosaic ritual has again a place in accordance with God's mind. How true is it, that "*all* Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17). Would any decry the Old Testament, as that with which they have nothing to do? Such an idea is probably engendered by ignorance of both Testaments, and is certainly not the fruit of deep spiritual teaching. So we read, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and through comfort (or, encouragement) of the Scriptures might have hope" (Rom. xv. 4). A direct incitement this is to study the Old Testament as well as the New. And in truth the Bible has this peculiarity, that at times, in what men would think the most unlikely place, the suited instruction is found, ready to be produced when needed. So it is that to Psalm lxix. we are directed by the Holy Ghost, to learn in what spirit the Lord walked upon earth. Thus we are taught to whom that Psalm, though not exclusively, refers; and who it was that was before the mind of God, when David penned it—One greater than David, though like him God's anointed in suffering, even

"Great David's greater Son."

And what instruction it affords! Christ pleased not Himself! The only One ever upon this earth, who could have made circumstances bend to His will, bore reproaches made against God. If He did that, should not we bear with one another? (Gal. vi. 2). This Paul desired, and

so expresses himself: "Now the God of patience and consolation (or, encouragement) grant you to be like-minded one toward another, according to Christ Jesus; that ye may with one mind (or, one accord) and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received you (not, us), to the glory of God" (xv. 5-7). How earnestly did the apostle desire that all danger of internal division should be averted. He had seen the reality of such a danger in the conduct of Peter and others at Antioch (Gal. ii. 12, 13). And though at Rome matters had not progressed that far, still the danger was patent, and the caution needed. In what a way would he prevent a rent, even by bringing God into the matter, and setting before the saints the example of the Lord! The glory of God was to be their aim, and the glorifying God with one accord and one mouth would be the result. Throughout this hortatory section of the epistle (xii.-xv. 13) he turns the attention of his readers to God. Beginning with the compassions of God, and reminding all that each receives a measure of faith from God, he seeks to impress on his readers the leaving all avengement with God (xii.). Further, subjection to constituted authority, he tells them, is subjection to God, for rulers are God's ministers (xiii.). Every Christian too is God's servant, before whose judgment-seat we each must stand. So acting in the spirit of the injunctions given, each one would be well pleasing to God, and there would result unanimous and harmonious praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. What troubles would have been avoided had this teaching been more attended to!

Here a question may be raised, as reception of saints is spoken of (xv. 7), To what is it that the apostle refers? The context, and indeed the wording of the injunction, both make it clear. It is reception to Christian intercourse, and not to fellowship at the Lord's table, that forms the subject of the exhortation. All those about whom he writes were in Christian fellowship already. Hence he writes, "Receive ye one another as Christ also received us," etc. To the Lord's table the company of saints gathered around it receive an individual, or individuals as authorised by John xx. 23. But here the reception spoken of

is mutual. "Receive ye *one another*," etc. Observing that will settle this question for any simple soul.

Gentiles.—The presence then of these two classes in the assembly at Rome, which called forth the exhortation, was not unforeseen by God. For "Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers; and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to Thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto Thy name. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with His people. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles: and laud Him, all ye people (or, Let all the peoples praise Him). And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and He that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in Him shall the Gentiles trust (or better, hope)" (xv. 8-12). Thus the law (Deut. xxxii. 43), the prophets (Isa. xi. 10), and the Psalms (xviii. 49); cxvii. 1), the three parts, well known to the Jews, into which the Old Testament was commonly divided (Luke xxiv. 44), each, and all, attest the purpose of God to bless Gentiles, and to have worshippers from amongst them without their being merged in Israel. That being the case forbearance of the one with the other was called for, and remembering the connection between vv. 8-12 with that which has preceded them, one sees the force and fitness of the better reading in v. 8. "For I say," instead of "Now I say." It was not as adding something fresh, so much as enforcing by what follows what he had just pressed, that those portions from the Old Testament volume are adduced. Hence *For* is more suitable than *Now*. But this need for forbearance would not always last. Hope looks on to the time, when such differences will for heavenly saints be a thing of the past. Hence in connection with the hope expressed in the quotation from Isaiah, the apostle pours out his heart for the Roman saints. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost" (13). With this wish, these exhortations come to an end. Full and varied have they been. Yet the reader may have noted the absence of anything directly bearing on family or domestic life, such as we meet with elsewhere. Into the family circle

we are not introduced in Romans. The Christian man's behaviour, as a partaker of Divine grace before, and to others in various relations in life *outside* the home is what is dwelt upon.

Titles of God.—In full accord with this God is here put prominently before the reader, as the God of patience, and of comfort, and of hope, and lower down, in v. 33, as the God of peace. Patience, comfort, hope, peace, all these the saint needs. And of all of them our God is God. Hence He can supply them as often and as fully as they are required. The supply will never fail, the spring can never dry up. What a God is ours !

Closing Remarks and Salutations.

Chapters XV. 14-XVI. 27.

THIS long letter now draws to a close, the apostle explaining why he had thus written, and reiterating his long-felt desire to visit them, a desire which he hoped might soon be fulfilled. In the opening of his letter he had acquainted them with his wish to labour among them (i. 11-15). Here he explains, why it was that by letter he was ministering to them, of whose ability to admonish one another he had no doubt, seeing they were "full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another" (xv. 14). He might well write thus, For some there were among them, as Aquila and Priscilla, who had doubtless learnt much from Paul, and who had shown their readiness and ability to impart to others of the truth they had received, as we see instanced in the pains they had taken at Ephesus with Apollos (Acts xviii. 26). Others, as Andronicus and Junias,* Paul's kinsmen and fellow-captives, had been Christians before Paul, and were of note among the apostles (Rom. xvi. 7). Nor were there wanting, as we learn from Phil. i. 14, those who could minister the Word in Rome. For "many of the brethren in the Lord," he writes in that epistle, "waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word of God without fear." Spiritual gifts may not have been so richly bestowed on the saints in the metropolis as on their brethren in Corinth; but clearly there was no dearth of those able to minister in the Word. It was not to a young assembly that he was writing, but to a company which numbered amongst it many earnest labourers, and even veterans in the holy warfare.

His Apostolic Sphere.—None of them, however, had that place in the Church of God which was his. Probably none of them had seen the Lord in glory, and to none of them had a commission been entrusted by Christ analogous to that of which Paul could speak. Yet how graciously

* It is a question whether this is the name of a woman, and, if so, the wife of Andronicus, or that of a man. If the former we should read Junia. Believing it to be the name of a man, we have written it Junias.

he writes, manifesting that delicacy of feeling of which we have proof elsewhere. Doubtless, had he been in Rome, all would have looked for his personal ministry as a matter of course. But others visiting Rome, probably, if able, would likewise labour there in the Word. To write, however, to the saints there as Paul did was a different matter. Was he intruding, in thus writing to them, taking thereby a place which was not properly his? They were within the sphere of service designated for him by the Lord (Acts xxii. 21; xxvi. 17), and recognised by the apostles at Jerusalem, as that to which he had been called (Gal. ii. 7-9). The grace of God, he owned it was grace, had been given to him to be a "minister of Christ Jesus* to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xv. 16). Special was this service and restricted to him. For just as the Levites had been waved as a wave offering† before God by Aaron (Numb. viii. 13), so the Gentiles are here viewed as offered to God, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost, Paul being the official instrument of Christ, the *leitourgos* for that purpose.

Is then Christian ministry to be viewed in the light of a sacrificial service? Are the exercisers of that ministry a sacrificing priesthood? Certainly not. Christian ministry was not peculiar to Paul. The service he here speaks of was. No support, then, for the figment of a sacrificing priesthood in our day could be drawn from this passage. As we have said, Paul and Paul alone, could speak of offering the Gentiles, as Aaron of waving the Levites. In it Paul had no successors, and though he calls himself a *leitourgos*, a term applied to the Lord in Hebrews viii. 2, as the High Priest, that same term *leitourgos* is used of earthly and secular rulers (Rom. xiii. 6), of Epaphroditus (Phil. ii. 25), and even of angels (Heb. i. 7). So nothing in support of modern sacerdotalism can be deduced from the apostle's language. Ministry and priesthood are quite distinct. All true Christians are priests (1 Pet. ii. 5), but all are

* "Christ Jesus" is the right order here, not "Jesus Christ."

† This is the statement in the original—see Revised Version. For the special thought of a wave offering, the reader is directed to a little work by the author, entitled "Thoughts on Sacrifices."

not ministers of the Word. We can see, then, how Paul could speak of himself in our passage figuratively, as if discharging a priestly function in connection with the Gentiles, without being misunderstood, as elsewhere he speaks figuratively of himself (Phil. ii. 17) as being poured out as a libation, or drink offering. No one misunderstands the last, nor need they misunderstand the first.

Prosecuting his Mission.—A favour indeed had been granted to him, and he desired to respond to it, glorying in Christ Jesus in those things which pertain to God. For aiming to spread the Gospel, not where Christ was named, lest he should build on another man's foundation; but as it is written, " To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see; and they that have not heard shall understand" (Isa. lii. 15), he had from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum, the country bordering on the east coast of the Adriatic, fully preached (or, fulfilled) the Gospel of Christ.* What, indeed, had Christ wrought by him, to make the Gentiles obedient by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Holy Spirit! We get here a glimpse, but only a glimpse, of the extent of his evangelistic labours previous to his imprisonment at Rome. We have met in the Acts with some account of his labours in Asia Minor, and in Macedonia, and Achaia. Here we read of a circut " unto Illyricum," unnoticed by the historian Luke. " In labours more abundantly," are his words describing himself (2 Cor. xi. 23). But are we to suppose that Illyria was not a scene of his labour, that it was only up to its Grecian frontier that he had worked in the Gospel? Some, it seems, would think that; but his words in v. 23, "having no more place in these parts," militate against this. Could he, we may ask, have written thus of Illyria, contiguous to Macedonia and Epirus in part, had it received no benefit from his evangelistic

* " *I have brought to fulfilment* the Gospel of Christ . . . So long as the news of salvation has not yet reached its full and destined diffusion it is still in the course of growth and increase; but when it has reached every quarter, so that no place remains any longer for the labour of the preacher (v. 23), it has passed from the state of growing increase into the *full measure of its dimensions*." —*Meyer, on the Romans.*

Other suggested interpretations are noticed by the author just quoted, but only, and rightly, to be rejected.

labours ? Could he have had no more place in those parts? Could he have spoken in the terms he has of his labours in the Gospel, if he had passed it by ?

Looking towards Rome.—Concluding, then, that he had evangelized the country from Thessalonica on the east to Illyria on the west, he could look across toward the regions beyond, and turn his thoughts in the direction of Rome, on his way to Spain. So explaining the reason of the long delay, " having been many times hindered " from fulfilling a cherished wish of his heart to visit the saints in Rome (22), he hoped shortly to set foot on the Italian peninsula, paying, as he tells them, a passing visit to the metropolis on his way to Spain. But first he was bound eastward to revisit Jerusalem, on the occasion of the alms of the saints of Macedonia and Achaia being conveyed thither for the poor saints in that country. This leads him to tell the Romans about that collection, and to justify the making of it by those formerly Gentiles. For if they (*i.e.*, Gentiles) " have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things " (27). In 2 Cor. viii.; ix, he had shown why saints should assist saints in need. Here he states why those formerly Gentiles should minister to those formerly Jews. Having performed that service, and sealed to Greek saints that fruit, he looked to go by Rome on to Spain. A passing visit he only contemplated. A sojourn of four years God had purposed. In the fulness of the blessing of Christ he hoped to visit them (the words " of the Gospel " should be here omitted); for the furtherance of the Gospel, and for its diffusion amongst the imperial suite, God had purposed the apostle's lengthy sojourn there, as a prisoner waiting for his trial. Man proposes, but God disposes, was indeed illustrated in his case. And it would seem that he had a presentiment of coming trouble in Judæa, for he desired their prayers * on his behalf, first for deliverance from those who did not believe in Judæa; next that his service at Jerusalem might be accepted of the saints; and, lastly, that, reaching them with joy by

* Urgent was his desire for their prayers. " For the love of the Spirit," he says, meaning not the Holy Ghost's love, but the love wrought by Him in the saints (Gal. v. 22).

the will of God, he might be refreshed. With this presentiment of coming danger to him, does not the wish for the saints in Rome come in sweetly, "Now the God of *peace* be with you all. Amen." (33). Well, what can be said as to the answer to these three desires? We know what befell him from the unbelievers in Judæa. We know *nothing* of the way that service of almsgiving was received. We *do*, however, know, that, when on the Italian peninsula, on his way between Puteoli* and Rome, he was met by Roman saints at Appii Forum, and at the Tres Tabernæ, he thanked God, and took courage (Acts xxviii. 15).

A Letter of Commendation.—Why Paul could write to them as he has done he has already stated (xv. 15). The reason for doing it at this moment we now learn (xvi. 1, 2). Phœbe, a servant or deaconess of the assembly at Cenchrea, the eastern port of Corinth, was going to Rome on some business not explained, and this served as a letter of commendation on her behalf, just as the Epistle to the Philippians was a letter of thanks for the ministry of love to Paul on the part of the saints in Philippi. Letters of commendation were needed in those days (2 Cor. iii 1), though Paul had no need to carry one on his own behalf to Corinth. But such an identification of fellowship at the Lord's table was needed, when moving about to places to which those carrying them were strangers. The apostle in this instance endorses and approves of the practice, commending by his letter Phœbe, of Cenchrea, to the saints at Rome. Very probably Phœbe was the bearer of it. How carefully in that case must she have guarded it throughout the long journey, probably across the sea, till she could deliver it into the hands of the saints in Rome. To whom did she hand it? We know not. To whom was it addressed? To all that were in Rome, beloved of God. Some there were in Rome personally known to Paul. To none of them was it specially sent. It was for the saints, the whole company of them in Rome. Was she aware of its value? She could not have known, even Paul could not have known, none could have then known, the rich,

* Now called Pozzuoli, a town on the northern shore of the bay of that name, near Naples.

rich blessing that letter was to prove to countless numbers of saints in after ages ministering peace to weary, troubled hearts, and working wide-spread deliverance in the western part of Christendom, by breaking the links, which had bound so many to the papal system, through the teaching it contains of justification by faith. The apostolic letter to the saints in Rome delivers from the thraldom of the Church of Rome. And still this letter works. Still it opens eyes. Still it can correct many a mistaken apprehension, however warmly cherished and tenaciously held, concerning the Gospel which Paul taught, the Gospel of Christ, the Gospel of God. It was a precious gift to the Church of God that was entrusted to Phœbe to convey to Rome.

Phœbe.—Who was this sister? Her name occurs nowhere else in the sacred volume. She was a servant, or deaconess of the assembly in Cenchrea. Here only do we meet with the official term applied to a woman in the New Testament. What the character of their service was 1 Tim. v. 10 may help us to understand, without confining the labours of such to the acts there specially described. Those who presided in the assembly were to be esteemed very highly in love for their work's sake (1 Thess. v. 12, 13). Sisters who laboured in the special sphere of women's work, were to be esteemed likewise. So they were to receive Phœbe in Rome in the Lord, *i.e.*, as in the bonds of Christian profession, as becometh saints, assisting her in whatever business she had need of them. "For," adds the apostle, "she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also." To what St. Paul here refers is unknown. He had years before shorn his head at Cenchrea, for he had a vow (Acts xviii. 18). There may be some connection between that and Phœbe's service. But not alone did she minister to him. She had been a succourer of many as well. She was a devoted woman, whose service is recorded on high. Mentioned however here, she stands out as an encouragement to others, that their service, however unobtrusive and but little known beyond the circle of those who benefit by it, is not unnoticed by Him who will requite them with His "Well done" in a coming day, accompanied by sub-

stantial and everlasting tokens of His approval.* We may be well assured Phœbe was not unnoticed nor unassisted at Rome, when she reached it, after this commendation from Paul.

Salutations.—Turning to notice some in Rome whom he desires the saints to salute on his behalf, he mentions first Priscilla and her husband Aquila, his fellow-workers in Christ Jesus, who for his life laid down their own necks. "Unto whom," he adds, "not only I give thanks, but also all the Churches of the Gentiles" (xvi. 3, 4). Of what he here speaks we must likewise confess our ignorance, though the danger at Ephesus might be referred to. Doubtless the Roman saints knew, and Paul had not forgotten it. This, however, spoke of past service, yet never to be forgotten. Their present service he would note—"The Church (or assembly) in their house." In this way they had served at Ephesus (1 Cor. xvi. 19), and now again in Rome. Their house was a meeting-place for worship. A company met there from time to time. At Laodicea Nymphas thus served (Coloss. iv. 15); and at Colosse Philemon (Phil. 2) in the same way opened his house. Valuable service this must have been. But neither at Rome, nor at Ephesus, nor at Laodicea, did such a company comprise all the saints in the place. A company did meet under Aquila's roof, and a company under that of Nymphas, and there probably weekly broke bread. Other saints in those cities must have met elsewhere. For in Colossians iv. 15 the apostle distinguishes between the brethren in Laodicea and the assembly in the house of Nymphas. And in our epistle we read in vv. 14, 15 of brethren and saints unnamed, whom we cannot suppose were already included in the salutation to the assembly in the house of Priscilla and Aquila. How use-

*The subjoined remarks are worth the reader's perusal. "'Assist,' is *paristemi*, 'to stand by her and help her.' The word translated 'succourer' (or helper) is stronger, and has a higher sense. *Paristemi* assists the principal person, whereas *prostates*, or *prostatis* in the feminine, is more helping as a patron, is used by Plutarch for a Roman patron, and is applied in special honour to Phœbe, as one whose help many had been dependent on, and had profited by. It was a complimentary touch of heart in which the apostle never fails."—*Note in "New Translation of the New Testament," by Mr. J. N. Darby.*

ful was that of which the apostle speaks! In those days, when persecution was often the lot of Christians, public halls, or buildings set apart for Christian worship, with which we are familiar, were probably neither politic nor perhaps possible to possess. It is interesting then, and helpful to see how the need at times was supplied. What was done then may be done still. Grand temples are not a *sine qua non* for Christian worship.

Others now come in for personal notice, sisters as well as brethren in Christ. There was Mary, who bestowed much labour on you, as we should read (not, us). Like others who bore that name, devotedness in service was her characteristic, it appears. Then there were labourers with whom Paul had worked, as Urbanus, and confessors with whom he had suffered, as Andronicus and Junias. Kinsmen too there were besides those just named, as Herodion. Households, too, are mentioned, as those of Aristobulus, and also of Narcissus. Were these two men dead, or, if alive, still outside the company of the faithful? For light on this, as on many another point, we must wait till the day reveals it, as also to understand, what doubtless at that time was well understood, why it is that Paul writes of the mother of Rufus as also his. Besides these we have three women mentioned with honour, Tryphœna, Tryphosa, and Persis; the two first still actively at work in Christian service; the last, Persis, mentioned as if her day of active service, for a time, or for ever, had ended. "Who labour," is said of the two former, "Which laboured," of the last. We are in danger of letting those who are laid by from active service slip out of our memory. Not so the apostle. He did not forget Persis, but reminded them that she had laboured *much* in the Lord. In this act of Paul we see of course what we should do. But as emanating from the Spirit of God, does it not tell us in this gentle way, that service done for the Master is never forgotten on high. Tryphœna and Tryphosa were surely well known among the community. Persis was likewise never to be forgotten. Now closing the list with Philologus, and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints that were with them, he bids them salute one another with a holy kiss, and assures them of the salutation of *all* the Churches of Christ, for

" all " is part of the text.

A Caution.—Happy service many then had engaged in. But a word of caution the apostle would now let drop. " I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences (or, occasions of stumbling), contrary to the doctrine (or, teaching) which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord* Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple " (17, 18). Then, as now, the enemy tried to sow trouble and discord among the saints. Against all that they were to be on their guard. Divisions made, and fostered, contrary to the teaching they had learned, were to be openly condemned by avoiding their authors and abettors, who were evidently numbered amongst the saints. Assembly discipline of putting out from the midst may have to be resorted to (1 Cor. v. 13). Here no such dealing was enjoined. Avoiding them is the course prescribed. And the test to be applied was the doctrine the Roman saints had learned. Learned where, and how ? From those taught in the Word. Hence to the revelation given were they turned. By that all was to be tried. Divisions, or stumbling-blocks, arising out of that which was contrary to apostolic teaching, manifested only too well that their originators and abettors, however zealous they might appear, were serving their own interest, not those of the Lord Christ. Christ's bondservants such were not in practice, however smoothly, however glibly they might speak. The name of the Lord might be much and often on their lips, but real subjection to Him and to His word was not in their hearts, nor displayed in their ways. "Contrary to the teaching ye have learned." This supposes the capability of the saints to judge for themselves. And surely, if it were more remembered that every true Christian has an unction from the Holy One, and knows all things (1 John ii. 20), the responsibility to judge by the only unerring standard would be more generally recognised and acted upon. To that we are turned, and by it alone shall we be kept straight.

* " Jesus " is generally omitted, only one uncial MS., L., exhibiting it.

Satan to be Bruised.—Confidently could the apostle give that warning. "For your obedience," he says, "is come abroad unto all men. I am glad, therefore, on your behalf; but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil." To resist the evil we are to be wise unto that which is good. There is no need to attempt to fathom the evil. Light banishes darkness. Truth repels error. Occupation with evil may ensnare saints, for they have in them a nature which can respond to it. If on the other hand they are wise unto that which is good, they will discern the evil and refuse it. That is what is asked of them in the present. As for the future, "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (20). God alone can do that. We cannot. Our part is to be wise unto that which is good. That will keep us by grace in the present, assured of what is to follow, the bruising of Satan under our feet. Those he has harassed and oppressed will see him, with whose power and cunning they cannot cope, under their feet shortly, the God of peace thus dealing effectually with him. What an encouragement for us all!

St. Paul's Token.—That was God's promise by His servant. Now to authenticate what the apostle wrote, and to preserve the saints from being imposed upon by forged letters, as seems to have been attempted at Thessalonica, he had early in the days of his written ministry selected a token, by which his genuine writings should be known. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you" (20). Written perhaps with his own hand, as was the case in his second letter to the Thessalonians (2 Thes. iii. 17), we find this salutation, either in its longest form (2 Cor. xiii. 14), or in its shortest (1 Tim. vi. 21), appended to all his epistles. And whilst he lived no other New Testament writer made use of it. At the end of the Revelation only, written after Paul's martyrdom, we have that which somewhat resembles it, "The grace of the Lord Jesus be with the saints (or, with all)."

Salutations from Others. — Hitherto — the token of Paul perhaps excepted—all that we have read was from Paul, dictated to his amanuensis, Tertius (22). By the list of those saluted by Paul we learn of some in Rome with whom he was evidently acquainted. From the

salutations we now meet with, addressed to the Roman saints, we learn who were at this time in Paul's company. There was Timothy, his fellow-worker, also Lucius and Jason and Sosipater his kinsmen. Next comes Tertius the scribe, then Gaius, Paul's host, and the host of the whole Church; and last, Erastus, the city chamberlain, and Quartus, a brother. Whether any of these, Timothy excepted, are the same people that we meet with elsewhere it is impossible to say. There is nothing to prove they were. As regards Lucius, Jason, and Gaius, it might be difficult to prove the contrary. Enough, however, is it for us to know that Paul was not alone. Gaius entertained him, Tertius wrote for him, and Erastus, who held an honourable and responsible post in the city of Corinth, was not afraid or ashamed to be thus openly connected with Paul and his company. "These that have turned the world upside down" (Acts xvii. 6), was the description by the Jews and the rabble in Thessalonica of Paul and his associates. Erastus had evidently found himself completely turned round. He was converted, had repented, and openly professed himself a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Gospel is suited to all classes as well as to all nationalities.

The Doxology.—The token which we have already met with at the end of v. 20, is found instead in some uncial MSS. in v. 24. By the oldest uncial MSS., followed by the chief recent textual critics (Alford alone of them being doubtful), the twenty-fourth verse is omitted. Now comes the doxology, a fitting conclusion to such a theme as the Gospel of the grace of God; its introduction witnessing to the feelings of the apostle's heart on the one hand, stirred as they were to their very depths by the contemplation of the character and fulness of the good news; and manifesting on the other his desire not to close his subject without one more last word to those beloved of God in Rome. At the end of chap. viii. he finished his great subject of the Gospel with the language of triumph. At the end of chap. xi. he is seen in a worshipping spirit. Here (xvi. 25-27) he finally closes with this doxology, "Now to Him that is of power (or, able) to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the (rather,

of a) mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets (or, prophetic writings), according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations (better, all the nations) for the obedience of faith: To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen." The genuineness of these verses has been questioned, and their proper place here has been doubted. Some few uncials, D^3FG, omit them altogether; others, as ALP, insert them at the end of chap. xiv.; BC, have them only at the end of the epistle, whilst AP, exhibit them here, as well as elsewhere, as we have stated. It seems best to regard them as genuine, and as in their right place at the close of the epistle. This is the judgment of such eminent textual critics as Lachmann, Tischendorf Tregelles, Alford, Westcott and Hort. So reads the Codex Sinaiticus.

Of God then Paul speaks, who was able to establish them according to his gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, who " came and preached peace," as he afterwards wrote, " to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh " (Ephes. ii. 17). Now connected with this Gospel there was a mystery, of which he here reminds them. A mystery, as the term used implies, was a secret, and kept secret, we learn, since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by prophetic writings is made known to all the nations for the obedience of faith, and that at the command of the eternal God. Evidently the Roman saints were already acquainted with it, and into the unfolding of it Paul did not at this time enter. What it was *we* learn from the Epistle to the Ephesians, written some years later.

Mysteries.—Now of mysteries there were several. Paul writes of himself and of others as ministers of Christ, and stewards of the *mysteries* of God (1 Cor. iv. 1). These mysteries remained mysteries, or secrets, no longer. In the Gospels (Matt. xiii. 11; Mark iv. 11; Luke viii. 10), we read of the mysteries of the kingdom. In the Revelation, we meet with the mystery of the seven stars (Rev. i. 20); the mystery of the woman, and of the beast (xvii. 7); and the mystery of God (x. 7), which will be ended when He deals openly with the powers arrayed

against Him. In St. Paul's writings we read of several mysteries, in the unfolding of which he was used, such as the mystery connected with Israel's present condition of blindness, till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in (Rom. xi. 25); the mystery concerning the bodies of the saints (1 Cor. xv. 51); the mystery of lawlessness (2 Thess. ii. 7); the mystery of the faith (1 Tim. iii. 9), and the mystery of godliness, or piety (1 Tim. iii. 16). Further, we have the mystery of God's will, to head up all things in Christ, which are in heaven and which are on earth (Eph. i. 9); the mystery of God (Col. ii. 2),* which includes all His purposes about the Lord Jesus Christ, in it being hid *all* the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Besides these there is what is called *the* mystery (Eph. iii. 3; Col. i. 26), defined as the mystery of the Christ (Eph. iii. 4; Col. iv. 3), comprising God's purposes about Him and His Body, which is also His Bride (Eph. v. 32), and which specially concerns those once Gentiles, who through grace are with those formerly Jews, "fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of God's promise in Christ Jesus by the Gospel" (Eph. iii. 6), blessings these already set forth in the two previous chapters of that epistle. Hence, in special connection with Gentiles, part of it so deeply concerning them, the apostle writes of the mystery of the Gospel (Eph. vi. 19), for which when in Rome he was an ambassador in bonds. So, treating of the Gospel in our epistle, he just mentions the mystery connected with it, but does not expatiate upon it.

We have learnt in the Romans of heirship, and of blessings for ever through Christ (viii); and have had the truth of the Body of Christ, just referred to, in chap. xii. In setting forth, then, such a full Gospel, and pressing home on the saints exhortations which flow from it, the mystery, he would have all to understand, was not ignored, nor teaching about it weakened. All teaching was not summed up in what is called Church truth, yet full Christian teaching would be imperfect without it. At the same time, the Gospel can be set forth without opening up that line of things, though its setting forth

* There is a question of the reading here, about which there is great difference of judgment.

assumed the existence of what is called the mystery of the Gospel. All the nations, *i.e.*, Gentiles, were deeply concerned in it, and by God's command it was made known. What such a revelation was to the Gentiles in early days we have probably but a faint idea. But we learn of the joy such experienced at Antioch, when first taught from the Scriptures of truth, that it was God's purpose to evangelise them (Acts xiii. 48). And now what remained, as the apostle surveyed his task completed, but to close with the words: "To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen" (27).* Amen he wrote. Amen we reply. How fully will that wish be carried out.

The Two Powers.—It is interesting to note, in concluding these papers on the Romans, the two antagonistic powers at work, the power of evil exerted by the enemy, and the power of God put forth for the good of His saints. Both powers are viewed as working through men; the former in making divisions among the saints, the latter in building them up according to Paul's gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ. Both are at work still. And if the sorrowful results referred to in vv. 17, 18 are seen in this day, the blessed effects described in vv. 25-27 may, in measure, be seen likewise. And He, who is able now to establish the saints, is the One who will bruise Satan under their feet shortly. How cheering that the last thoughts presented to us in this epistle are about God, His present activity in grace, and His future exercise of power on behalf of His saints. Needed to be remembered by us this surely is. How gracious of our God, by the pen of His servant, to keep it before us.

Here this long and deeply-interesting letter ends; and the reader may rise up from its perusal, reminded by its closing words of the effect it can have on the soul by the exercise of sovereign power in grace. The epistle was now ready for Phœbe to be entrusted with its conveyance from Greece to Rome. What effect it had there is to us unknown. What effect it can now have on the reader, it is for each one to determine.

* The Revised Version, connecting better v. 27 with v. 25, thus translates: "To the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever. Amen."

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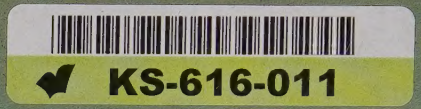
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